



DAMAGE CONTROL

*U.S. Secret Service Chief
Disputes Reports of Crash*

Secret Service Director Joseph Clancy testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 19, 2015, before the Senate subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management hearing to review the fiscal 2016 funding request and budget justification for the Secret Service.

(AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)
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Obama orders cuts in federal greenhouse gas emissions



President Barack Obama signs an Executive Order, entitled "Planning for Sustainability in the Next Decade," which will cut the Federal Government's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over the next decade, Thursday, March 19, 2015, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. Behind the president is Senior Adviser Irian Deese and Kate Brandt, Federal Chief Sustainability Officer.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS

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WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama signed an executive order on Thursday to set new goals for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of federal agencies, his latest use of his executive authority to address the root causes of climate change and press private companies and foreign governments to follow suit.

Obama's directive orders federal agencies over the next decade to cut their emissions by an average of 40 percent compared with their levels when he won office in 2008, and to increase their use of electricity from renewable sources by 30 percent.

The goals are in line with a commitment that he announced in November as part of a climate agreement with China. In the deal, Obama said the United States would reduce its emissions of the heat-trapping gases that are warming the planet by 26 percent to 28 percent below

2005 levels by 2025.

They are also part of Obama's effort during his last two years in office to use an expansive interpretation of his presidential authority to push ahead with unilateral moves to combat climate change in the face of strong opposition from the Republican-controlled Congress to advancing legislation that would do so.

"We're proving that it is possible to grow our economy robustly while at the same time doing the right thing for our environment and tackling climate change in a serious way," Obama said during a visit to the Energy Department on Thursday to announce the order.

"America once again is going to be leading by example."

The federal government's share of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States is minuscule - less than 1 percent in 2013, the last year for which data is available - so the order by itself is unlikely to make

a major dent in the president's broader goals to cut emissions.

But because the federal government is the largest user of energy in the U.S. economy - encompassing 360,000 buildings, 650,000 fleet vehicles and \$445 billion in annual spending on goods and services - it has the potential to influence private companies to step up their emissions-cutting targets.

In conjunction with the executive order, the Obama administration released a new scorecard to allow federal suppliers to disclose their emissions and track their reductions.

Several large companies that do business with the federal government - including IBM, General Electric, Honeywell and Northrop Grumman - announced new emissions-cutting goals of their own.

"As we get economies of scale, and demand for solar and wind and other renewable energies grows, obviously that can help drive down the overall price, make it that much for efficient, and we start getting a virtuous cycle that is good for the economy and creates jobs here in America," Obama said after touring the Energy Department's solar-paneled rooftop. □



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Secret Service Chief Disputes Reports of Crash

ALICIA A. CALDWELL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new director of the U.S. Secret Service went on the offensive Thursday in Congress, disputing characterizations in news reports that two senior agents crashed a government vehicle into a security barrier at the White House after a night of drinking earlier this month.

"Previous reports of a crash are inaccurate - there was no crash," Joseph Clancy said during a hearing by a Senate Appropriations subcommittee. "The video shows the vehicle entering the White House complex at a speed of approximately 1 to 2 mph, and pushing aside a plastic barrel. There was no damage to the vehicle."

Clancy also told lawmakers that some video recordings of the March 4 incident have been erased



Joseph Clancy, director of the United States Secret Service, testifies during a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 19, 2015. Clancy has maintained that reports of two agents crashing a car into a White House barricade were overblown.

(Drew Angerer/The New York Times)

and the agency that protects the president is working to recover them. Problems within the Secret

Service have been highlighted in recent years as agents and officers have been caught up in a series of embarrassing drunken incidents. The most scan-

dalous incident involved more than a dozen agents and officers caught up in a prostitution scandal in Colombia in advance of a 2012 presidential visit.

Earlier this month The Washington Post first reported that a pair of senior agents drove a government vehicle into a White House security barrier after a night of drinking on March 4. The Post has said in its news accounts of the incident that agents "drove into," "struck" and "hit" the barricades, although a separate editorial by the Post on March 12 described the agents as "allegedly crashing" into the barrier. A tongue-in-cheek Post opinion column the same day chastised the agency for "for crashing into yet another public relations barrier."

The Post also initially reported that the agents may have driven over a suspicious item suspected of being a bomb during the incident. □

Obama congratulates Netanyahu on election victory in phone call

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama on Thursday called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to congratulate him on his election victory two days ago, relieving pressure from critics for not embracing the Israeli leader's success sooner.

The call came as the White House continued to push back against Netanyahu's pre-election rejection of a two-state solution to Palestinian-Israeli peace.

The White House said in a statement that Obama stressed the United States' close security cooperation with Israel, but also empha-

sized the U.S. commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state existing alongside Israel.

On another sensitive subject, Obama addressed negotiations with Iran over Tehran's nuclear program and said he was focused on a deal that would prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, the White House said. Netanyahu has been a vocal critic of Obama's diplomatic outreach to Iran.

Earlier Thursday, House Speaker John Boehner had mocked the Obama administration's chilly reaction to the Israeli prime minister's election victory. □

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Virginia governor calls for probe into student's arrest

HEIDI BROWN

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia (AP) —

The governor of Virginia has called for an investigation into the rough arrest of a university student who appears in a photo with a bloody face as he is being held down by an officer.

About 1,000 students gathered at the University of Virginia campus Wednesday night to demand justice for Martese Johnson, whose lawyer said he needed 10 stitches in his head following the arrest.

The Alcoholic Beverage Control agent who made the arrest early Wednesday, listed in court records as J. Miller, said in the arrest report that Johnson "was very agitated and belligerent."

Johnson was charged on two counts: obstruction of justice without force, and public swearing or intoxication, Charlottesville General District Court records show.

A statement from a group calling itself "Concerned Black Students," however, claims the arrest was un-



Virginia student and Jefferson Scholar Aryn Frazier speaks to a large crowd during a protest for fellow student Martese Johnson at the University of Virginia Amphitheatre in Charlottesville, Va. Johnson was bloodied during an arrest Wednesday about 1 a.m. by State Alcoholic Beverage Control agents outside Trinity Irish Pub on the Corner.

(AP Photo/The Daily Progress, Andrew Shurtleff)

provoked and extreme.

"The brutish force used resulted in his head and bodily injuries," the group said in a statement. "His treatment was unprovoked as he did not resist questioning or arrest."

Johnson was on hand for Wednesday night's rally, flanked by several students. He spoke briefly and kept touching his face where he received stitches from the scuffle with police.

"I beg for you guys to

please respect everyone here," Johnson told the crowd. "We really are one community."

His lawyer, Daniel P. Watkins, said Johnson is a 20-year-old, third-year student at UVA who is majoring in Italian and Media Studies, holds "numerous leadership positions" at the school, and has no criminal record.

Earlier Wednesday, UVA student Bryan Beaubrun said he was with Johnson

and photographed the arrest. Beaubrun said Johnson was trying to get into the Trinity Irish Pub when he was stopped by a bouncer. Then, an Alcoholic Beverage Control officer grabbed Johnson by the arm and pulled him away from the bar to speak with a group of police officers, Beaubrun said.

After about a minute, Beaubrun said, Johnson asked the ABC officer to let go of his arm and tried pulling away from the officer. At that point, another ABC officer grabbed Johnson from behind and the two ABC officers wrestled Johnson to the ground, Beaubrun said.

He said Johnson hit his head on the ground when he was tackled and that

police acted with unnecessary force.

"He didn't need to be tackled. He wasn't being aggressive at all," Beaubrun said.

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe's office issued a statement asking state police to investigate "the use of force in this matter." The ABC said the agents involved with the arrest are being restricted to administrative duties while the investigation is underway.

ABC agents in Charlottesville have been accused of heavy-handed actions in the past. In one case, the state of Virginia reached a \$212,500 settlement last year with a UVA student who was arrested after her purchase of water was mistaken for beer. □

Judge won't release grand jury records in NY chokehold death

COLLEEN LONG

TOM HAYS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Testimony heard by a grand jury that declined to indict a white New York City police officer in the chokehold death of an unarmed African-American man will not be released, a judge said Thursday, arguing there wasn't a good enough reason to make the secret information public.

Civil liberties groups had asked the court to order Staten Island prosecutors to release the grand jury transcript, including the testimony of the officer involved, Daniel Pantaleo, and dozens of witnesses, detailed descriptions of evidence and other documentation. A similar step was voluntarily taken by the prosecutor in Ferguson,

Missouri, when a grand jury there refused to indict an officer in the fatal police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown, also an unarmed African-American. The deaths of Brown and Garner and the lack of indictments in their cases sparked nationwide protests about the treatment of minorities by law enforcement and a debate about the role of race in policing.

Civil liberties lawyers had argued that the public needed to reconcile the widely watched video of the arrest with the decision not to indict the officer involved.

But State Supreme Court Justice William Garnett wrote that the law required the New York Civil Liberties Union and the other parties who brought the lawsuit

to establish a "compelling and particularized need" to release the grand jury minutes.

Donovan argued that the disclosure would damage the credibility of prosecutors seeking to assure both grand jurors and witnesses that details of their participation would be kept from public view. Following the grand jury's decision, Donovan asked for some information to be made public, but it didn't include testimony or exhibits shown to jurors.

Pantaleo and other officers stopped Garner on July 17 on suspicion of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes. A video shot by an onlooker and widely watched online shows Garner telling the officers to leave him alone and refusing to be handcuffed. □

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Deadly machete attack on Burmese boys stuns US neighborhood

JONATHAN DREW

Associated Press

NEW BERN, North Carolina (AP) — A frantic and bloodied mother whose three young sons were killed in a machete attack jumped from an upstairs window and ran across the street for help, according to neighbors.

A couple, who, like the suspect and victims, were Burmese refugees, was startled Tuesday night by pounding on their door by the mother. They said she was bleeding from a wound in her back and asking for help. "We were scared," said A Bu, who took in the mother and a surviving daughter while they waited for police to arrive.

The suspect, identified as 18-year-old Eh Lar Doh Htoo, attacked the family in their home Tuesday night. The brothers, ages 1, 5 and 12, were killed, police said.

New Bern Police Lt. Ronda Allen confirmed Thursday that a machete was used in the attack. She



This booking mug provided by the Craven County Sheriff's Office, in North Carolina, shows Eh Lar Doh Htoo, 18, under arrest, Wednesday, March 18, 2015. Htoo is charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. Other charges are also expected. Three children, ages 1, 5 and 12, were stabbed to death and two other people were wounded in a Burmese community in New Bern, N.C.

(AP Photo/Craven County Sheriff's Office)

said the father of the children was away from the house at work during the attack.

When officers arrived, he was still holding the weapon, New Bern Police Chief Toussaint Summers Jr. told The Associated Press.

Htoo also wounded the brothers' mother and their 14-year-old sister. Police

said they don't know a motive for the attack and a language barrier hampered their investigation.

The sounds of screaming and dogs barking, followed by police sirens, awakened several neighbors who live

in what they describe as a normally quiet neighborhood. The diverse neighborhood includes several families of Burmese refugees. Htoo was charged with three counts of murder and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. Police said they don't know whether he has an attorney.

New Bern is a coastal town and home to about 1,900 Burmese refugees, who resettled in the area after fleeing persecution from the country once called Burma, now known as Myanmar.

"Anytime this happens in any community, any part of town, it's surprising," the police chief said.

The stabbings happened on a street of about 10 homes that face a railroad track and several dilapidated commercial buildings.

About 11 p.m. Tuesday, officers were called there to

a report of a person with a knife. They entered the home and found two dead boys. A third died at a hospital.

Police did not release the victims' names.

Another neighbor said the suspect had scared his family by knocking on their door several times in the middle of the night.

"He's crazy," neighbor Ner Wah said Wednesday. "I told my wife: 'Be careful. Don't answer the door.'"

Wah said that like him, Htoo was a member of the Karen ethnic group, an oppressed people whose language has been banned back home.

Htoo once came to Wah's house during the day to ask him to help translate documents, but Wah said they weren't friends.

"We felt very scared of him," Wah said.

Htoo's first court appearance was scheduled for Friday. □

FBI agent:

Tsarnaev had extremist materials on computer

DENISE LAVOIE

AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had a variety of extremist materials on his computer, including an issue of the al-Qaida magazine Inspire with an article entitled "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," an FBI agent testified Thursday.

Tsarnaev, 21, faces the possibility of the death penalty in the 2013 attack, which killed three people and injured more than 260.

During opening statements this month, his lawyer admitted that he participated in the bombings, but said his older brother, Tamerlan, was the mastermind who recruited a young, impressionable Dzhokhar into the plan. The defense argues that Dzhokhar does not deserve the death penalty.

Prosecutors, however, have portrayed Dzhokhar, then 19, as an active and willing participant in the bombings. Tamerlan was killed in a gun battle with

police after the bombing. On Thursday, Kevin Swindon, a supervisory special agent for the FBI's cyber squad in Boston, reviewed the contents of Tsarnaev's laptop computer, as well as a desktop computer at his family's Cambridge apartment, thumb drives and other devices.

Several devices, including Dzhokhar's computer and a thumb drive found in his dorm room at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, contained issues of Inspire magazine and other radical materials, including a series of audio lectures by Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born Muslim cleric who was suspected of being a terrorist and killed in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen in 2011. Judy Clarke, one of Tsarnaev's lawyers, said during her opening statement that much of the material on Tsarnaev's computer was on subjects more common to college students, including girls, cars and homework. The defense contends that for

much of the radical material cited by prosecutors, it is impossible to tell whether Tsarnaev is the one who downloaded it or if it was sent to him by others, including his brother.

In fact, the thumb drives introduced Thursday contained material that appeared to have been put on them by other Tsarnaev family members, including a pay stub of his sister-in-law and a rental agreement in her name. Tsarnaev's thumb drive also contained homework by some of his college friends. Swindon was expected to be cross-examined by Tsarnaev's lawyers on Monday, when the trial resumes.

In the indictment against Tsarnaev, prosecutors allege he downloaded a copy of Inspire that included instructions on how to build bombs with pressure cookers, the kind of device used in the marathon bombing. Two pressure-cooker bombs exploded near the marathon finish line. □



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US Financial Front:

Why Fed won't have a big impact on your loans anytime soon

MATTHEW CRAFT
PAUL WISEMAN
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Nobody knows when exactly, but the day will eventually come when the Federal Reserve nudges its benchmark lending rate from next to zero to something slightly higher.

When that happens, it will put upward pressure on borrowing rates throughout the economy — for credit cards, mortgages and student loans. But that doesn't mean the era of incredibly low interest rates will soon be over.

The Fed's chair, Janet Yellen, has taken pains to be cautious. On Wednesday, the central bank gave more signals that it will move slowly toward its first interest-rate increase in nearly a decade. By the end of the year, Fed officials expect the benchmark rate will reach 0.625 percent.

It was a different world the last time the Fed began a series of hikes. Rates were already much higher than today. In June 2004, the Fed lifted its benchmark rate from 1 percent to 1.25 percent. By the time the Fed was finished in 2006, the rate had reached 5.25 percent.

Nobody expects anything like that now. With the economy still growing slowly and inflation minuscule, rates will likely hover near historic lows. The Fed doesn't want to ratchet up the monthly payments on your credit card. It's in no

rush.

"You're going to see rates remain low for quite some time," says Patrick Maldari, senior fixed-income specialist at Aberdeen Asset Management.

HOUSING

Many expect mortgage rates to creep higher this year. The average 30-year mortgage carries a rate of 3.7 percent, according to Freddie Mac. That's close to a record low of 3.31 percent and compares with an average rate of 5.9 percent a decade ago.

Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate.com, thinks homeowners ought to lock in mortgage rates as long as they remain below 4 percent. If you haven't refinanced already, in other words, consider it soon.

Home loans won't hinge on the Fed's next move, though. Mortgage rates are closely tied to long-term interest rates, specifically the 10-year Treasury note. These rates are tethered to the Fed's benchmark yet have plenty of wiggle room.

The 10-year yield has actually been falling over the past year.

The reason? The Treasury market is dominated by global players. So when Europe's economy runs into trouble, for example, traders around the world look for safety in the Treasury market, buying U.S. government bonds and pushing yields down. Another factor: The Fed is keeping a

lid on yields by sitting on trillions of dollars of Treasuries following a huge bond-buying program that ended last year.

SAVINGS

It's been a tough time

carefully. A series of hikes large enough to lift yields on savings accounts, however, could put the economic recovery at risk by curbing lending and business spending. "Anything that would give savers a



A sheet of uncut \$100 bills is inspected during the printing process at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing Western Currency Facility in Fort Worth, Texas. Nobody knows when exactly, but the day will eventually come when the Federal Reserve nudges its benchmark lending rate from next to zero to something slightly higher. But that doesn't mean the era of incredibly low interest rates will be over.

(AP Photo/LM Otero)

for people socking away money in savings. On average, savings accounts pay an annual percentage yield of 0.09 percent, according to Bankrate.com. A one-year certificate of deposit pays a paltry 0.28 percent.

For every \$1,000 saved, in other words, the bank will give you \$2.80. Ka-ching! "Savings rates are nearly at zero and, unfortunately, I think depositors aren't going to see much of a difference," says Casey Bond, managing editor at GoBankingRates.

The Fed has signaled that it will raise rates slowly and

real boost would be too disruptive," Bond says.

"I think people need to be focused on other things, like avoiding bank fees," Bond says. "Fees can wipe out your earnings because savings rates are so low."

CREDIT CARDS

Credit card rates could start to inch up once the Fed raises its benchmark federal funds rate — especially the low teaser rates credit card issuers use to entice people to sign up or shift credit card balances. McBride advises that borrowers "grab those zero-interest balance transfers

and introductory credit card rates. As the Fed moves away from zero interest rates later this year, credit card issuers will too. Chip away at your variable-rate debt now before interest rates start to climb."

Credit card rates remain high — variable credit card rates average nearly 15.8 percent, according to Bankrate.com. But they could head higher if the fed funds rate goes up. That's because credit card rates are based on the prime rate that banks charge their best customers, and the prime rate is based on the Fed funds rate.

INVESTMENTS

To judge by the stock market's daily swings, investors fear the Fed's first rate increase. Speculation that the Fed is preparing to move usually knocks stocks down. But the market has actually performed well in the face of rising interest rates.

A recent report from UBS looked at the Fed's initial rate hikes going back to 1954. It showed that the Standard & Poor's 500 index rallied an average of 7.6 percent in the next six months.

Many investors are confident that as long as the Fed moves gradually, the stock market should be fine. That's what happened in the last round of Fed hikes, in 2004. The S&P 500 finished the year with a 9 percent gain. □

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Of Global Concern:

US 1st lady puts focus on empowering girls through education

ELAINE KURTENBACH
Associated Press
TOKYO/WASHINGTON (AP)

— Education is the starting point for opportunity, U.S. first lady Michelle Obama said Thursday as she and her Japanese counterpart Akie Abe showcased efforts to help girls stay in or return to school.

"Like so many women I was able to achieve both my professional and personal goals because of my education," Mrs. Obama said after Abe announced plans for Japan to support the "Let Girls Learn" project aimed at promoting education for girls in the developing world.

"My education is the starting point for every opportunity in my life," Mrs. Obama said. "When we put limits on women's lives we stifle their full potential."

"Let Girls Learn" will support a variety of projects, from building toilets, providing security and helping girls afford or make school uniforms to encouraging greater awareness of the role education of both genders plays in sustainable economic development.

"But we all know that the problem here isn't just about infrastructure and resources. It's also about attitudes and beliefs. It's about whether fathers — and mothers — think their daughters are as worthy of an education as their sons." The two first ladies have different backgrounds. The U.S. first lady is a Princeton-educated lawyer. Abe is

the daughter of the former president of a leading Japanese confectioner, Morinaga & Co.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic

later told the prime minister that it was delicious.

"I've actually never been there," Abe quipped.

"Maybe next time I come to visit, you can join us,"

in your possibilities. These happy things that are taken for granted in our countries can never be attained by children in some developing countries. This is the

\$250 million in new and re-allocated funds to support the initiative, and is also hoping to win more backing from the private sector and crowd-funding.

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers will also cooperate with the Peace Corps, in implementing the Let Girls Learn program which is being rolled out initially in 11 countries — Albania, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Georgia, Ghana, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Togo and Uganda. The U.S. and Japan are using the initiative to also underscore their partnership as close allies, and Mrs. Obama's stop in Japan is seen here as a "makeup" call after she did not accompany her husband during his state visit to Tokyo last year.

Abe is soon due to make a reciprocal visit to the U.S.

In a gesture of cordiality, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko received Mrs. Obama at their home deep inside the verdant, secluded grounds of the Imperial Palace — a quiet interlude in an otherwise hectic schedule.

Mrs. Obama complimented the Emperor on the beauty of the cherry blossoms that have just begun to bloom, and he replied that the trees were from the southern islands of Okinawa.

Fitting in some sightseeing on Friday, Mrs. Obama will visit a Buddhist temple and a Shinto shrine in the ancient capital, Kyoto, before going to Cambodia. □



U.S. first lady Michelle Obama, right, talks to participants during the roundtable meeting as part of Japan-U.S. Joint Girls Education event at Iikura Guest House in Tokyo, Thursday, March 19, 2015. Mrs. Obama and her Japanese counterpart Akie Abe announced plans Thursday to deepen cooperation in helping girls in developing nations finish their educations.

(AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

Party has conservative views on gender equality, but the first lady is a businesswoman, owns a bar in downtown Tokyo, and supports local artists and craftsmen.

After attending a discussion session with Japanese college students and with Caroline Kennedy, the U.S. ambassador to Japan and daughter of President John F. Kennedy, Mrs. Obama ate lunch with Mrs. Abe at her restaurant, Uzu. She

Mrs. Obama said.

Mrs. Abe is soft spoken, but has described herself as the "domestic opposition," at times openly disagreeing with her husband.

But she has actively backed his high-profile campaign to promote greater gender equality in government and business.

"Some girls must give up their future or their education," she said. "To commute to school. To chat with a friend. To believe

harsh reality."

As a major aid donor, Japan plans to cooperate with the community-based, Peace Corps-run "Let Girls Learn" initiative recently announced by President Barack Obama and his wife. On Thursday it announced plans to devote 42 billion yen (\$340 million) over three years to supporting girls' empowerment and gender sensitive education.

The U.S. has earmarked



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Powerful regional Afghan police chief killed in Kabul

AZAM AHMED

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KABUL, Afghanistan - Matiullah Khan, whose rise from local militia commander to powerful regional police chief left him one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in southern Afghanistan, was killed in a targeted suicide bombing in Kabul, officials said Thursday.

From his beginnings as an illiterate highway patrol commander in Oruzgan province, Khan started a militia operation that made millions of dollars securing military coalition supply convoys through a decade of war and turmoil. He obtained so much influence during his years as a private commander that even before 2011, when he was anointed police chief of Oruzgan by President Hamid Karzai, who hailed from his Popalzai tribe, he could freely appoint government officials in the province.

The Afghan government remained silent about Khan's death on Wednesday and through much of Thursday, referring all questions to the spokesman for the Interior Ministry, who did not respond to requests for comment. Accounts of Khan's killing obtained from members of parliament and other officials varied, though Khan was said to be in Kabul on official business, staying at a downtown hotel, the Safi Landmark.

Around 8 p.m., he was walking in the streets of Kabul's Police District 6 when a person wearing a burqa approached and detonated a suicide vest, according to a senior Afghan security official in Kabul, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a continuing investigation. Officials who saw Khan's body said he had suffered shrapnel

wounds to his chest.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on Thursday, a seeming insurgent success after trying to kill Khan at least six other times. Still, while the attack bore all the hallmarks of an insurgent hit job, some warned that Khan had numerous rivals within the government.

An outpouring of condolences followed news of Khan's death, even from people who in the past might have criticized his heavy-handed influence. Dost Mohammad Nayab, the spokesman for the governor of Oruzgan, said it "will take 14 years to fill the gap he leaves behind." Hajji Mohammad Essa, an elder in Tirin Kot, said, "He was like a mountain for us." For years, Khan enjoyed unparalleled influence in Oruzgan, where he gained a reputation as a fierce enemy of the Taliban. Villagers and elders came to ask his assistance or seek his guidance.

He became a classic symbol of the U.S.-backed strongman turned government official, a hallmark of the long war in Afghanistan. Like his counterpart in Kandahar province, Lt. Gen. Abdul Raziq, who is widely accused of human rights abuses and running illicit businesses, Khan enjoyed the support of coalition military officials, who found him an indispensable ally in their fight against the Taliban.

"He was representative of a new breed of warlords," said Anand Gopal, the author of the book "No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War Through Afghan Eyes." "These are people entirely created by the international presence."

Khan first came to power



Matiullah Khan, who at the time headed a private army whose soldiers fought alongside American forces and charged trucks for safe passage through his territory, at his home in Tarin Kowt, in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan in 2010. Khan, one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in southern Afghanistan, was killed March 18, 2015, in a targeted suicide bombing.

(Adam Ferguson/The New York Times)

as a commander for the now defunct Afghan highway police. When that group was disbanded, he

retained the loyalty of a number of its members who continued working for him as private security along

the highway.

During those years, Khan worked extensively with the American and Australian Special Operations forces who fought in Oruzgan. He helped secure the highway that countless convoys traversed, earning millions in contracts to safeguard the international forces who shuttled goods between Kandahar and Tirin Kot, the capital of Oruzgan. He also sent his men on missions with them to upend Taliban-controlled areas. But Khan was dogged by accusations of aiding, and profiting from, drug smugglers who traveled the same highways, and of running an unregistered, illegal protection force. Over the years, he denied both allegations. □

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- Chicken Sate \$10.85

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People walk by as a police officer guards the National Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia, Thursday, March 19, 2015. Tunisian security forces arrested nine people linked to the deadly attack on the National Bardo Museum that left scores dead and wounded and threatened the country's fledgling democracy and struggling tourism industry, the president's office said Thursday.

(AP Photo/Christophe Ena)

Islamic State group claims Tunisia attack

Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — The radical Islamic State group claimed responsibility Thursday for the attack on a famed Tunis museum that left 23 people dead and scores of tourists wounded, and upended the country's struggling tourism industry. Defying the extremists, hundreds of Tunisians rallied Thursday at the National Bardo Museum, the site of the attack, stepping around trails of blood and broken glass to proclaim their solidarity with the victims and with Tunisia's fledgling democracy. One person carried a sign saying "Tunisia is bloodied but still standing."

Tunisian security forces arrested nine people, five with alleged direct connections to Wednesday's attack by two gunmen who

were later slain by police, the president's office said. The other four suspects arrested in the central part of the country were part of a cell supporting those involved in the attack, the statement said.

Prime Minister Habib Essid told France's RTL radio that Tunisia was working with other countries to learn more about the slain attackers, identified as Yassine Laabidi and Hatem Khachnaoui. He said Laabidi had been flagged to the intelligence agency, although not for "anything special."

The attack was the worst at a tourist site in Tunisia in more than a decade and prompted a leading Italian cruise ship line to announce it was canceling all stops in the North African nation indefinitely.

The deaths of so many tourists will create massive trouble for Tunisia's tourism industry, which attracts thousands of foreigners every year to the country's Mediterranean beaches, desert oases and ancient Roman ruins — and which had just started to recover after years of decline. Two major cruise ships whose passengers were among the victims quickly left the port of Tunis early Thursday, leaving behind grieving family members and slain passengers.

Razor wire ringed the museum entrance Thursday and security forces guarded major thoroughfares in Tunis, the capital.

Culture Minister Latifa Lakhdar gave a defiant press conference in the museum, where blood trails still stained the ground. □

Netanyahu backtracks from Palestinian state opposition

JERUSALEM (AP) — Days after winning re-election, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday backtracked from hard-line statements against the establishment of a Palestinian state in the face of a diplomatic backlash.

In the closing days of his campaign, Netanyahu said there could be no Palestinian state while regional violence and chaos persist — conditions that could rule out progress on the issue for many years. The comments, aimed at appealing to his nationalist voter base, angered the Obama administration, which views a two-state solution as a top foreign policy priority.

Netanyahu said in a TV interview Thursday that he remains committed to Palestinian statehood — if conditions in the region improve — and to the two-state vision first spelled out in a landmark 2009 speech at Israel's Bar Ilan University. "I haven't changed my policy," he said in a full interview with MSNBC's "Andrea Mitchell Reports," excerpts of which will be shown on NBC's "Nightly News" later on. "I never retracted my speech." At the time, he said he would agree to a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes Israel as a Jewish state. The Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has recognized Israel as a state but refuses to recognize its Jewish character, and

last year formed a unity government backed by the Hamas militant group, which is sworn to Israel's destruction. In the interview, Netanyahu also pointed to the presence of hostile Islamic groups across the region and said that any captured territory handed over to Abbas would be taken over by militants. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 and two years later Hamas seized control of the coastal territory, ousting forces loyal to Abbas.

"I don't want a one-state solution, I want a sustainable, peaceful two-state solution, but for that circumstances have to change," Netanyahu said. "And every territory that is vacated in the Middle East is taken up by Islamist forces." "You can't impose peace. And in any case, if you want to get peace, you've got to get the Palestinian leadership to abandon their pact with Hamas and engage in genuine negotiations with Israel for an achievable peace," Netanyahu said. "You have to have real negotiations with people who are committed to peace. We are. It's time that we saw the pressure on the Palestinians to show that they are committed too," he said.

A day before the election Netanyahu told the Israeli news website that a Palestinian state would not be established on his watch because of the current climate in the region. □



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Eurozone leaders dampen Greek hopes for bailout relief



French President Francois Hollande, right, speaks with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday, March 19, 2015. Tensions over Greece's massive financial bailout overshadowed a European Union summit amid fears that the country could accidentally drop out of the euro, triggering a crisis across the currency zone shared by 19 nations.

(AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

RAF CASERT
 FRANK JORDANS
 Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders, losing patience with Greece's leftist government, warned Thursday that it needs to improve its balance sheet much faster if it wants their urgently needed money. "A deal is a deal," said Dutch Prime Minister Mark

Rutte, reflecting exasperation among many leaders about the pace at which Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras is implementing a Feb. 20 agreement to push through reforms in exchange for their help in keeping Greece solvent. Still, Tsipras strode into an EU summit beaming and defiant, saying it is the rest of Europe that needs

more ambition.

"The European Union needs bold political initiatives," he said.

Hanging over the summit of 28 heads of state and government are fears that the hard line of the Greek government formed in January could cause the country to drop out of the euro, something that would trigger a crisis for the currency shared by 19 nations.

Tsipras made a last-minute request for a mini-summit Thursday night with half a dozen top EU officials. Those officials agreed to the meeting — over the objections from some of the other leaders, who complained they were being left out — but made it clear they have no intention of re-negotiating the terms of the Greek bailout. "There can be a solution only on the basis of the agreements reached in the eurogroup," Merkel said, referring to the meeting last month of the eurozone's 19 finance ministers. "Progress," added the

head of the eurogroup, Jeroen Dijsselbloem. "That is not going to happen tonight."

In addition to Merkel and Tsipras, the meeting will include French President Francois Hollande, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi and EU President Donald Tusk.

"All these negotiations and meetings delay the core issue, which is putting the plan into reality," Rutte said.

Tsipras, brushing aside the criticism, insisted his government will end austerity and increase social spending. On Wednesday the Greek parliament approved an anti-poverty bill. It was the first piece of legislation that his government has put through — and it did so without full consultation

from its creditor partners.

Greece's economic policies drew criticism even from nations outside the eurozone. British Prime Minister David Cameron marveled Thursday at how poorly the Greek economy has fared compared to his own. "When I first came here as prime minister five years ago, Britain and Greece were virtually in the same boat. We had similar-sized budget deficits," he said. "The reason we are in a different position is we took long-term, difficult decisions and we had all of the hard work and effort of the British people."

French President Francois Hollande said that if Greece wants to spend more it needs to find the money inside its own borders. □

France:

Comedian convicted of condoning terrorism

AURELIEN BREEDEN
 © 2015 New York Times

PARIS - The provocative French comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala was found guilty this week of condoning terrorism after a Facebook message he posted in January suggested sympathy with one of the gunmen in the attacks that killed 17 people in Paris.

The court in Paris gave him a suspended two-month jail sentence.

M'bala M'bala was convicted under a new law enacted in November meant to rein in speech support-

ing terrorism. The law was aggressively enforced by the French authorities in the wake of the January attacks.

While the law allows for up to seven years in prison and 100,000 euros in fines, prosecutors in M'bala M'bala's case had sought a fine of 30,000 euros, or about \$32,000, converted into 200 days of jail time if he failed to pay.

Just days after the attacks that killed 12 people at the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, one municipal police officer south of Paris,

and four people at a kosher supermarket, M'bala M'bala wrote on his Facebook page that he felt like "Charlie Coulibaly."

The message, which blended the popular "I am Charlie" slogan with the name of the gunman at the supermarket, Amedy Coulibaly, was posted on a day when millions had rallied around France to condemn the attacks.

David de Stefano, one of M'bala M'bala's lawyers, said in a telephone interview that they would appeal Wednesday's conviction. □

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Appetizers: Choose One
 Caesar Salad
 Escargot Bourguignon
 Fruits of the Seven Seas
 Choice of Soup:
 (Homemade Chicken Noodle or Lobster Bisque)

Entrees: Choose One
 Lemon Garlic Grouper
 Served with Rice and vegetable
 Twin Tenderloin (Filet Mignon)
 Topped with mushrooms, melted mozzarella cheese and Demi Glaze
Fish and Chips
 Balashi Beer Battered Grouper
 with Fresh Herb Tartar Sauce,
 Lemon and Fries
Chicken Parmesan
 Served on Fresh Made Fettuccini
 topped with melted
 Mozzarella and shaved Parmesan
Chicken and Coconut Shrimp
 Grilled Chicken Breast and Coconut
 Shrimp served with Rice and Vegetables

Desserts:
 Double Chocolate Sensation Cake or
 Raspberry New York Cheesecake or
 Ice Cream Sundae with Caramel Sauce

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Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro gestures to supporters during an anti-imperialist rally at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela. Supporters of President Nicolas Maduro have launched a petition drive to end what they consider to be U.S. aggression.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

Venezuela seeks 10M signatures in anti-US petition

FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela

(AP) — Supporters of President Nicolas Maduro have launched a petition drive to end what they consider to be U.S. aggression.

The goal is to round up 10 million letters and signatures demanding that President Obama repeal an order freezing the assets of Venezuelan officials accused of violating human rights during anti-government protests.

Maduro has blasted Obama's move as an attempt to undermine his socialist rule. The Venezuelan president was the first to sign the petition before government supporters Thursday began fanning out across the South American country to canvass for more. "Obama is crazy," said German Pacheco, one of about 300 people who lined up at Plaza Bolivar in downtown Caracas to support the initiative. "All he wants to do is to take ownership of the country's oil wealth."

Opponents say Maduro is trying to distract attention from a deepening economic crisis and have denounced what they say is an attempt by educators to force children to draw anti-US pictures as part of the government campaign. The government denies it's pressuring anyone into signing the petition. □

Cuba:

Street dogs find homes in venerable institution

M. WEISSENSTEIN

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Old Havana's Museum of Metalwork is home to soaring colonial archways, galleries of gleaming artworks and five of the world's luckiest street dogs.

In the heat of the day, Vladimir, Canela, Aparicio,

More than a dozen state institutions ranging from Cuba's Central Bank to a public toilet have taken street dogs under their wings in recent years, assigning them official IDs and housing and granting them year-round medical care and protection from the city dogcatcher, ani-

state protection, the roughly two dozen former street dogs enjoy, at most, a quasi-official status, conveyed by the frequently thin pretext that they are working security. Cuban law banning animals from workplaces contains an exemption for guard dogs and this legal cover for the ex-strays

emony in which the dog received an award for saving the air conditioners," Garcia told The Associated Press.

The adoption of street dogs by some of Havana's most illustrious institutions is driven mostly, however, by the guards' love of animals and their desire for company on long shifts in a city with little crime.

Dogs in Old Havana benefit from the presence of dozens of state restaurants that donate leftovers to the animals, some of which have grown nearly obese. The dogs with Perez enjoyed an enormous dinner of half-eaten pork chops and leftover chicken and rice served on grease-soaked paper plates from a nearby restaurant.

"They don't eat bones," said Victoria Pacheco, a guard in the metalwork museum. "They eat cold cuts, mincemeat, hotdogs and liver."

The animal protection society maintains a list of 21 dogs living in state institutions, including a Communist Party gas station, offices of the Cuban Journalists' Union and a mechanical workshop of the Ministry of Public Health.

"They stay here and nothing happens to them," said Dalia Garcia, the caretaker of a public bathroom in Havana's Vedado neighborhood that's home to two former street dogs. "Everyone takes care of them, no one hits them. They don't bark and they don't bite anyone." □



Former street dog Vladimir wears an ID collar that gives his name and residence, as he sits at the entrance of the Old Havana Museum of Metalwork in Havana, Cuba. Cuban law banning animals from workplaces contains an exemption for guard dogs. This legal cover for the ex-strays was bolstered when a dog at a government office awakened a guard one night by barking when she heard would-be thieves removing air conditioners from the windows, according to Nora Garcia, president of the Cuban Association for the Protection of Plants and Animals.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Leon and Carinoso sprawl in the grand entrance of the centuries-old stone building. At night, the animals patrol the streets with local police or sleep under the museum's grand stairway. Each wears a collar with a tattered card bearing its name, photo and the words "I live in the Museum of Metalwork."

mal protection officials say. "I don't like dogs but I've really developed a soft spot in my heart for them," said Yarisbel Perez, a guard at a historic building overlooking Old Havana's Plaza Vieja, where two sets of guards share custody of P9 and Nina, the former named after a city bus line. Despite the trappings of

was bolstered when a dog at a government office in eastern Havana awakened a guard one night by barking when she heard someone trying to remove air conditioners from the windows, said Nora Garcia, president of the Cuban Association for the Protection of Plants and Animals. "There was a public cer-

Canadian found dead at Los Cabos resort in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A

Canadian man was found beaten to death on a beach at the Mexican resort of Los Cabos on Wednesday.

Prosecutors in the state of Baja California Sur said the 50-year-old man appeared to have been beaten with a blunt object. The prosecutors' office said the cause of death was severe head trauma and a skull

fracture.

Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development declined to confirm the man's identity or hometown, or confirm the circumstances of the death.

His body was found on the El Tule beach, midway between the twin resorts of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo.

Last week, a 35-year-old

Canadian woman died off Cabo San Lucas when a surfacing whale crashed into the side of the boat she was travelling in.

Also Wednesday, the Mexican navy said it had found a boat stolen during a mass robbery of tourists on an island off the nearby city of La Paz last week.

The boat was abandoned in an area of mangroves near La Paz.

On March 14, a group of armed men arrived at the island of Espiritu Santo aboard a boat and stole the belongings of a group of mainly foreign tourists on a day trip to the island. The thieves also stole one of the boats the tourists had arrived in.

The navy said it was stepping up patrols in the area "to prevent incidents like this." □



Special Attention of the Kiwanis Club of Aruba for Our Elderly

ORANJESTAD - The Kiwanis Club of Aruba which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary, has always been very active with projects for the Aruban community. This time we celebrated with the elderly community in Savaneta. Sunday, March 8th, some members of the Club surprised the residents of Huize Maris Stella in Savaneta with a visit. The Organizing Committee of the Kiwanis Club of Aruba in cooperation with Huize Maris Stella had on that special Sunday



containing various products.

A special Thank you goes to Manrique Capriles, Moises de Marchena, Oduber Agencies, Compra, Martijn Trading, Botica Aloe, Botica Santa Anna, DA and Maggy's which companies donated the products for these care packages. A total of 125 care packages were donated to the citizens of Huize Maris Stella and to the inhabitants of the adjacent homes of Huize Maris Stella.

As that Sunday was also International Women's Day, Mrs. Filomena Wong recited a beautiful poem in



dedication of this Day. The Kiwanis Club of Aruba hereby thanks the staff and personnel of Huize Maris Stella for their cooperation and in particular Mrs. Calixta from the Activity Department of the home. □



a nice program put together, that started from 9am until 1 pm. The elderly enjoyed an authentic Aruban breakfast followed with a delicious lunch. Mr. Nelson Sprock with his "Caja di Orgel" together with Mr. Etty Toppenberg provided the entertainment so that the elder citizens could sing and dance. Meanwhile, some other members of the Kiwanis Club visited the Department of Anglo, Aloe and Izora where the inhabitants of the home received a 'care package



Barney's Bar & Restaurant: "Food And Fun For Everyone!"

PALM BEACH - Opened for just a little over 3 years, Barney's Bar & Restaurant located in Palm Beach has become one of the favorites of both locals and tourist in Aruba. Owners Eline and Ron run the front of the house while Chef Jan makes sure all meals are served fresh and timely. Barney's is a family friendly restaurant offering a menu which is varied and excellent prices which won't break the bank.

The kitchen is open from 5pm till 11pm Monday through Saturday. The bar is open till midnight and offers karaoke on Friday nights where you will often hear Ron, Eline & Chef



trout filet with lemon garlic butter out of the oven or Barney's crab cakes! Then I will proceed to the Parmesan Grouper, a grouper filet topped with a mix of parmesan cheese, mustard, mayonnaise and egg served with stir fried veggie's and a side of your choice or I will build my own burger which includes a choice of ground beef, chicken or vegetarian patty and I load up on the variety of toppings they offer to choose from.

Another favorite on the main course menu is Barney & Fred Sword Fight: a skewer with pieces of tenderloin grilled to perfection just how I like it and a skewer with grilled shrimp served with stir fried veggies and a side of my choice.

As I reported at the beginning, Barney's has been opened just a little over



singing for your entertainment along with tourists and locals!

Besides offering a daily special along with 3 special soups of the week, they have several Special Nights and some are ALL YOU CAN EAT!

Monday it's ALL YOU CAN EAT Fajitas for \$19.50, which is a choice of chicken, beef or grouper served with all the toppings. Choose your first choice and then feel free to order more of the same meat/fish choice or choose to try something

different.

Tuesday is Schnitzel night offering several choices of toppings such as the Jager Schnitzel which is topped with a Jager cream sauce,

and french fries for \$19.50!

Friday night is ALL YOU CAN EAT Sliders night, starting you off with a cheeseburger, grouper, steak, fried chicken and chorizo



sautéed mushrooms, onions and bell peppers, for \$17.50.

Wednesday night is Grouper night with a variety of toppings of your choice such as the Italian Grouper topped with tomato, mozzarella and a green pesto for \$19.50.

Thursday night is Chef's award winning ALL YOU CAN EAT Ribs! You start off with 2 racks of ribs with your choice of BBQ sauce, regular BBQ, devils hot, or honey smoked, and includes a salad, cole slaw

comes with cole slaw and french fries and once you finish the first 5 sliders feel free to re order your favorites for only \$19.50!

Saturday night is ALL YOU CAN EAT Steak night which includes a salad, cole slaw and french fries for only \$21.50.

Some of my favorites on their regular menu are starting off my meal with the Firecrackers Shrimp; shrimp deep fried tossed around in a light spicy homemade sauce or the Smokey's sauce; smoked

3 years and has become extremely popular. Walk-ins are welcomed if seats are available but it really is necessary now a days to make a reservation to insure you have a table. You can contact your concierge desk at your hotel/time share or call them directly at 586-5420. Feel free to check them out on Facebook at Barneys Restaurant to see what's going on.

So, what are you waiting for? MAKE THAT RESERVATION TODAY!!!!☐

Consolidated balance sheet of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. and its subsidiaries as at December 31, 2014

<i>(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)</i>		
	2014	2013
Assets		
Cash and due from banks	2,105,390	1,663,083
Investment securities	235,982	224,062
Loans and advances to customers	4,075,961	4,039,288
Investment in associated companies	867	763
Bank premises and equipment	178,957	179,383
Customers' liability under acceptances	3,655	4,560
Other assets	64,727	69,111
Total assets	6,665,539	6,180,250
Liabilities and equity		
Liabilities		
Customers' deposits	5,670,196	5,210,446
Due to banks	23,079	33,308
Acceptances outstanding	3,655	4,560
Accrued interest payable	18,557	17,413
Current profit tax liabilities	38,026	42,907
Deferred tax liability	30,544	31,124
Provisions	79,952	69,808
Other liabilities	73,588	89,329
	5,937,597	5,498,895
Equity		
Share capital	51,000	51,000
Other reserves	206,937	190,661
Retained earnings	458,579	429,251
	716,516	670,912
Minority interest	11,426	10,443
Total liabilities and equity	6,665,539	6,180,250

Consolidated income statement of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. and its subsidiaries for the year ended December 31, 2014

<i>(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)</i>		
	2014	2013
Interest income	323,648	318,391
Interest expense	21,244	19,947
Net interest income	302,404	298,444
Fee and commission income	192,079	182,735
Fee and commission expenses	67,839	63,626
Net fee and commission income	124,240	119,109
Income from foreign exchange transactions	50,199	49,217
Income from investment securities	177	9,538
Operating income	477,020	476,308
Salaries and other employee expenses	187,199	182,551
Occupancy expenses	24,177	24,311
Net impairment losses on loans and advances	21,122	13,476
Other operating expenses	65,268	64,985
Operating expenses	297,766	285,323
Net result from operations	179,254	190,985
Net income / (loss) from associates	(265)	2,885
Net result before tax	178,989	193,870
Profit tax	38,676	47,295
Net result after tax	140,313	146,575

Explanatory notes to the consolidated financial highlights as at December 31, 2014

A) Accounting policies

1. GENERAL

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. and its subsidiaries (the "Group") are set out below. These explanatory notes are an extract of the detailed notes included in the consolidated financial statements and are consistent in all material respects with those from which they have been derived.

2. BASIS OF PREPARATION

The consolidated financial statements, from which the consolidated financial highlights have been derived, are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS").

The figures presented in these highlights are stated in thousands of Antillean Guilders ("ANG") and are rounded to the nearest thousand.

The policies used have been consistently applied by the Group and its subsidiaries and are consistent, in all material respects, with those used in the previous year.

For financial statement presentation purposes certain 2013 balances have been adjusted.

3. BASIS OF CONSOLIDATION

Subsidiaries are all entities over which the Group has the power to govern the financial and operating policies. Subsidiaries are fully consolidated from the date on which control is transferred to the Group until the date that control ceases. The following subsidiaries have been consolidated as of December 31, 2014.

- Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V. and subsidiaries
- The Windward Islands Bank Ltd.
- Maduro & Curiel's Bank (Bonaire) N.V. and subsidiary
- Maduro & Curiel's Insurance Services N.V.
- MCB Group Insurance N.V.
- Progress N.V.
- MCB Risk Insurance N.V.

ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

Associated companies are entities over which the Group has significant influence but not control. Investments in associated companies are accounted for under the equity method of accounting.

4. INVESTMENT SECURITIES

The Group classifies its investment securities in the following categories: financial assets at fair value through profit or loss and held-to-maturity. Management determines the classification of its investment securities at initial recognition.

A security is classified in the category financial assets at fair value through profit or loss if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term. Investment securities with fixed maturities where management has both the intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held-to-maturity.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss and financial assets classified as held-to-maturity are initially recognized at fair value. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss are subsequently carried at fair market value. Held-to-maturity securities are carried at amortized cost less impairment, if applicable. Unlisted equity securities for which no readily available market exists, and for which other methods of reasonably estimating fair value are clearly inappropriate or unworkable, are carried at cost less impairment, if applicable.

The gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss are included in the consolidated income statement in the period in which they arise.

5. LOANS AND ADVANCES TO CUSTOMERS

Loans and advances are carried at amortized cost, less an allowance for loan impairment. An allowance for loan impairment is established if there is an indication that the Group will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original contractual loan terms.

B) Specification of accounts

(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)

I Assets

	2014	2013
Investment securities		
Held-to-maturity	224,991	212,899
Financial assets at fair value	10,991	11,163
Total investment securities	235,982	224,062

	2014	2013
Loans and advances to customers		
Retail customers	1,665,791	1,617,881
Corporate customers	2,406,309	2,405,152
Public sector	11,780	16,096
Other	92,440	93,275
Gross loans and advances to customers	4,176,320	4,132,404
Less: allowance for loan impairment	(100,359)	(93,116)
Net loans and advances to customers	4,075,961	4,039,288

II Liabilities

	2014	2013
Customers' deposits		
Retail customers	2,174,927	2,080,051
Corporate customers	2,691,321	2,469,696
Other	803,948	660,699
Total customers' deposits	5,670,196	5,210,446

Report of the independent auditor on the consolidated financial highlights

To the Shareholders and Board of Directors of
Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V.
Curaçao

The accompanying consolidated financial highlights, which comprise the consolidated balance sheet as at December 31, 2014, the consolidated income statement for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. for the year ended December 31, 2014. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those consolidated financial statements in our report dated February 18, 2015. Those consolidated financial statements, and the consolidated financial highlights, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on those financial statements.

The consolidated financial highlights do not contain all the disclosures required by International Financial Reporting Standards. Reading the consolidated financial highlights, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V.

Management's Responsibility for the consolidated financial highlights

Management is responsible for the preparation of the consolidated financial highlights derived from the audited consolidated financial statements in accordance with the Provisions for the Disclosure of Consolidated Financial Highlights of Domestic Banking Institutions, issued by the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten ("CBCS").

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the consolidated financial highlights based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810, Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial highlights derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. for the year ended December 31, 2014 are consistent, in all material respects, with those consolidated financial statements, in accordance with the Provisions for the Disclosure of Consolidated Financial Highlights of Domestic Banking Institutions, issued by the CBCS.

Curaçao,
February 18, 2015

KPMG Accountants B.V.

S. Agarwal FCA

[BALANCE SHEET AND EQUITY]:

- For financial statement presentation purposes, certain 2013 balances have been adjusted.
- MCB Group's total assets increased with a strong 8% or ANG 485 million, and for the first time passed the ANG 6.5 billion mark reaching ANG 6,665 million.
- The main cause of this milestone was the 9% (ANG 460 million) growth in customer deposits.
- Provisions increased by ANG 10 million (15%), because of increased obligations for the Bank's post-retirement benefits schemes.
- Because of the lack of demand in credit, the Curaçao and Sint Maarten credit markets contracted and the "Loans and advances to customers" increased with a modest 1% or only ANG 37 million, with most of the growth in the Group's loan portfolio coming from Aruba.
- The increase in liquidity from the customer deposits mentioned above was largely invested in "Cash and due from banks" that increased a whopping 27% or ANG 442 million.
- At year end, our shareholders' equity excluding minority interest surpassed the ANG 700 million mark and was strengthened with an additional ANG 46 million reaching ANG 717 million. This solid increase of 7% continues to show strong capitalization. It represents a key strength of our Group and one that our community, our clients and our staff can continue to rely and count on.

[PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT]:

- Income is derived from both local and international activities of the Group. These income streams continue to be well diversified.
- The results in 2014 show a minimal increase in operating income of 0.1% or ANG 712 thousand, depicting the continued difficult economic environment the Group operated in.
- Compared to 2013, there was barely any income from investment securities (ANG 9.5 million in 2013), partly compensated by a 4% increase in net fee and commission income.
- The largest increase in expenses is a direct reflection of the continued weak economies causing an increase in net impairment on loans and advances with ANG 8 million due to higher provision for some corporate and commercial loans.
- The small growth in operating income, combined with an increase of 4% (ANG 12 million) in operating expenses, caused the net result after tax to decrease 4% to a still healthy profit of ANG 140 million.

[LOANS]:

- The loans in our loan portfolio remain well diversified by types of customers, size, maturity and sectors.
- The small growth in loans was mainly due to the 3% (ANG 48 million) increase in loans to retail customers, especially in Aruba.
- The credit restrictions established in March 2012 by the Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten continued until August 2014. Since September 1, 2014 the restrictions were revoked, because of the monetary developments in the two countries.

[TAXES]:

- MCB Group's profit tax obligation resulting from operations was ANG 39 million, while the Group also paid ANG 5.3 million in turnover taxes.
- Our employees paid wage taxes amounting to ANG 29 million, while social premiums paid were ANG 24 million.
- MCB Group collects foreign exchange license fee/tax on behalf of the CBCS, and in turn remits it to the respective governments of Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In 2014 MCB collected and remitted ANG 46 million in license fees for Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In Aruba, Caribbean Mercantile Bank collected AWG 15 million in exchange tax which it in turn remitted to the Central Bank of Aruba for the government of Aruba.
- Together, the taxes and premiums mentioned above contributed ANG 159 million to the public coffers of our countries.

[EMPLOYMENT]:

- As at December 31, 2014, MCB Group employed 1,502 persons across all islands.
- During the year, MCB Group paid its employees ANG 100 million in salaries, not including social benefits, pensions, medical and other insurances.

[COMMUNITY]:

- As a socially responsible corporate member of the communities we serve, we always contribute in one way or another to important organizations, projects and events of a cultural, social, religious, sport, educational and environmental nature benefiting our youth, neighborhoods and different charitable institutions.
- Our contributions vary in the form of donations, sponsoring, gifts, knowledge and last, but certainly not least, physical ("hands-on") work by many of our colleagues. In 2014, we contributed with more than 5,000 donations amounting to more than ANG 3 million. In addition to the donations, we also sponsored several events for more than ANG 2 million.
- Good healthcare in our opinion is a basic need in a community and we are very grateful for the work performed by thousands of volunteers, nurses and doctors. In 2014, Prinses Wilhelmina Fonds commemorated 65 years of supporting patients with cancer and supporting all kinds of research on the topic. Since its early beginning 65 years ago, our Group contributed to this very good cause with both funds and contributions in kind and they can count on us that we will continue to do so.
- Fundashon Baseball Tigers Bandabou promotes physical education in the neighborhoods and together with several other youth sports events like the annual "Kareda di Lito" and the "Vakantie ku deporte" could again count on our continued support.
- In the second week of December we celebrated the 10th annual "Siman di Kurason Positivo", whereby again more than 250 of our employees voluntarily provided direct social assistance to the less fortunate in our society.
- In 2006, InselAir had its first flight from Curaçao to Aruba. In the eight years since, the local privately held airline added 21 destinations in the Caribbean as well as South and North America. The company is an example of how local entrepreneurs with a vision and hard work can team up and make a successful business. The company transported more than 1 million passengers in 2014 and in this way connects families, friends, business people and cultures. For all the above and the positive contribution of InselAir to the local economies, the company received the MCB Prize 2014.
- We are very grateful to our volunteer colleagues who during the entire year and every year again keep supporting great causes and people where needed.

As we have seen time and time again, because of unexpected (world) events it is difficult to predict the future and it is not necessary to be able to do so exactly, as long as we are prepared for whatever the future brings. At MCB Group we are committed to being prepared for any eventualities, by having a solid Bank with good financial ratios and a modern infrastructure of branches and digital capabilities, the best trained and coached colleagues and knowledgeable directors. We are grateful to our clients, our employees, our shareholders, our supervisory directors, our regulators and especially the communities we serve for the support we enjoyed in 2014 and hope to be able to enjoy this same backing in 2015 and beyond. We are confident that by being well prepared, in the year 2016 we will celebrate our Group's 100th anniversary in a befitting manner!

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Chuck, Nikki, Kati, Billy, Chopin and Michaela love MooMba!



PALM BEACH - Chuck and Nikki White, Kati and Billy Morrison, Chopin White and Michaela Saunders from Clarkston, Michigan are crazy about MooMba Beach, where they enjoy sitting at the bar, having breakfast, lunch and/or dinner. Bare feet in the

sand from morning until sunset, the group is one happy bunch. Logical, as it is their vacation. Their friend Parker Hornath told Chuck and Nikki about MooMba Beach; as it is their first time on the island, they asked around for tips where to go and what to



do. They found out for themselves what they liked most on the menu: hot wings! They go well with their sun-kissed faces. Chuck, Nikki, Kati, Billy, Chopin and Michaela

agree that getting to know Anandi (nicknamed Chelsea for unknown reasons), their waitress and bartender at MooMba listed high on their highlight list, as did a trip on the Jolly Pirates sailing boat.

We hope you can stay on Aruba for a few more weeks, thus escaping the cold weather in Michigan a bit longer. If that is not a possibility, then please come back next year. Te aworo, dear friends. □



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, holds the alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G and downhill's disciplines trophies as she celebrates on the podium, at the World Cup finals in Meribel, France, Thursday, March 19, 2015.

Associated Press

Lindsey Vonn ready for more after World Cup super-G win

JEROME PUGMIRE
AP Sports Writer

MERIBEL, France (AP) — Another day of skiing, another crystal globe for Lindsey Vonn. And she's expecting more. "I foresee next year as hopefully even better," said the 30-year-old American, who claimed the season-long super-G title at the World Cup finals on Thursday, two years after a career-threatening knee injury. "It's going to be fun to have a normal preparation. I only got about five days of downhill training and about 20 days of ski training. I had a lot of races this season where I wasn't that confident, in some situations I lacked the training." Vonn won the final super-G of the season on Thursday and with it her 19th crystal globe trophy — equaling the record of Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark. She beat Anna Fenninger of Austria and Tina Maze of Slovenia in Thursday's race to claim the discipline title, one day after winning the downhill title.

Continued on Next Page



BIG GAME HUNTER

Georgia State stuns Baylor in NCAA Tournament

Page 20

Georgia State players celebrate as they surround R.J. Hunter (22) after he made the game-winning shot against Baylor late in the second half in the first round of the NCAA college basketball tournament, Thursday, March 19, 2015, in Jacksonville, Fla. Georgia State won 57-56.
Associated Press

super-G

Continued from Previous Page

Her seven career downhill titles and 67 race wins are women's records in Alpine skiing.

"Even though I have 19, these two are probably the most special of all of them," Vonn said. "Pretty much everyone didn't think I would be back. For myself, for everyone who doubted me, this is a pretty good answer."

Vonn held a slender eight-point lead over Fenninger coming into the race, and was under pressure after the world super-G champion posted the fastest time. Vonn was only .01 second ahead at the first time split but finished .49 clear of Fenninger.

In the race for the overall World Cup title, defending champion Fenninger is 32 points ahead of Maze, who finished third. The overall title will be decided in the weekend's slalom and giant slalom races.

After crossing the line in the super-G, Vonn turned around quickly to check her time. She knew it was good, but the half-second margin seemed to surprise even her.

With her hands stretched out, she lay on her back for several moments, savoring the moment as fans cheered her on at the bottom of the Roc de Fer



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, celebrates in the finish area after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G race, at the World Cup finals in Meribel, France, Thursday, March 19, 2015.
Associated Press

course.

Earlier this season, Vonn overtook Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell's 35-year-old record of 62 race wins — quite an achievement after her serious injury.

Vonn blew out her right knee in a super-G at the 2013 world championships in Schladming, Austria, and then hurt the same knee again in her comeback, keeping her out of last year's Sochi Olympics.

She went nearly two years

without a victory before winning a downhill in Lake Louise, Canada, in December.

In the men's super-G, Dustin Cook posted his first World Cup win while Kjetil Jansrud took second and gained some ground on Marcel Hirscher in the contest for the men's overall title.

Cook, a 26-year-old Canadian, won the race by .05 seconds. Roger Brice of France was third.

Jansrud has already won

the season-long super-G title, and the 29-year-old Norwegian also took the downhill title on Wednesday.

Hirscher, a slalom specialist, finished fourth for his second-best result in super-G and still leads the overall standings by 34 points with the slalom and giant slalom races still to come.

Cook won silver in the super-G last month at the world championships, and had earned a first World Cup podium with a third-

place finish in the discipline two weeks ago in Kvitfjell.

He had never placed higher than 12th prior to this season, and said he had contemplated retirement.

"I had a good, long talk with one of my friends from home, and he was like 'Dude, don't even question it, just keep going,'" Cook said. "I talked to him about it recently and said, 'Remember that conversation we had?' and he said, 'Yeah, thank God you listened to me.'" □

Managers like idea of 3-on-3 overtime in NHL next season

SANDRA HARWITT

Associated Press

BOCA RATON, Florida (AP)

— A proposal to change the format of NHL games by instituting three-on-three play in overtime has gotten the support of the league's general managers, although final approval is still needed.

The GMs devised two options related to overtime: a switch to three-on-three play for five minutes that the Swedish Hockey League uses, or a four-on-four to three-on-three approach similar to the lower-tier American Hockey League.

The recommendations will go to the joint NHL/NHL

Players' Association competition committee, which meets in June and must approve any rule changes.

That committee also will consider the other recommendation from general managers of instituting a coach's challenge system for goaltender interference. If it goes through, coaches will be able to challenge goalie interference only on goals scored and only if they have their timeout left.

The AHL increased its overtime play to seven minutes, starting out with four-on-four play for the first three minutes and then changing to three-on-three for

the remainder of overtime. While the NHL understands shootouts are popular with fans, the league would like more games going beyond regulation to be decided in overtime.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, who confirmed the GMs were unified in switching to either the Swedish Hockey League or AHL overtime format, acknowledged shootouts are here to stay.

"The consensus in the room, overwhelmingly, is we're not getting rid of the shootout," he said. "It was how do you reduce the number of games that go to the shootout, keep the shootout special.

"We're going to discuss with the competition committee because, obviously, we want the players' association input on how we're going to approach it."

Detroit Red Wings general manager Ken Holland, a proponent for an overtime change, has no doubt a new rule will finally take hold.

"We're going to take it to the competition committee, basically see what the players feel about it," he said. "But we're going to make a change."

As for the proposed goalie interference rule change, if the coach challenge is incorrect, he'll lose his timeout.

Officials on the ice as well, as in the NHL situation room in Toronto, will view video to determine the correct call. There will be no penalty component to the coach's challenge.

"We ultimately concluded that we had to do something on goaltender interference that was different because it's a judgment call," Bettman said.

Florida Panthers general manager Dale Tallon been pushing for a coach's challenge rule for years and was happy the issue finally received traction.

"It's about time," he said. "I got voted down 28-2 four years ago and today it was 29-1 in favor." □



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Sidebar is the newest restaurant on Aruba, and oh boy, it is a beauty! Unique in a trendy, sassy and sexy way, it is ready to welcome all of you.



Common ground and denominating factor of the guests includes the enjoyment of life, in particular the good things, such as great bistro food, wonderful drinks and a relaxed, happy atmosphere. Sidebar is the name of a stylish, hip restaurant on the side of the Renaissance Marketplace; just hop inside, sit at the bar or on the amazing porch and enjoy – the party at Sidebar starts at 8 am and goes on until midnight.

At Sidebar you can sit in a booth, on a lounge chair, on a bar stool or stand at a cocktail table. Side Bar is all about options, so go and check it out on the far end corner of the Renaissance Marketplace.

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NHL Capsules

Blackhawks win defensive struggle at Rangers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Brad Richards broke a scoreless deadlock 7:19 into the third period, and the Chicago Blackhawks cooled off goalie Cam Talbot and the surging New York Rangers 1-0 on Wednesday night. Right after Rangers defenseman Dan Boyle rang a shot off the crossbar behind Blackhawks backup goalie Scott Darling, Richards got the puck in front of the New York net, waited patiently and snapped a shot past Talbot for his 11th goal.

The Blackhawks stretched their winning streak to four and snapped the Eastern Conference-leading Rangers' winning run at five games. Richards, a member of the Rangers last season, has

five career goals against New York. That was enough to make a winner of Darling, who played for just the third time since Dec. 13. He made 25 saves to improve to 7-3 and earn his first NHL shutout in 10 career games.

DUCKS 3, KINGS 2, OT

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Ryan Kesler scored 45 seconds into overtime, and the Anaheim Ducks rallied from another third-period deficit in the final Freeway Faceoff meeting of the regular season.

Patrick Maroon and Jakob Silfverberg scored third-period goals for the Ducks, who took four of five in this lively rivalry. John Gibson made 29 saves as Anaheim took sole possession of the overall NHL lead with 97 points after rallying for its NHL-best 12th comeback victory when trailing after

two periods this season.

Justin Williams scored the tying goal with 4:18 left for the Kings, who still took sole possession of third place in the Pacific Division. The defending Stanley Cup champions have earned points in seven of eight games down the stretch.

BLUE JACKETS 4, OILERS 3, SO

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP)

— Alexander Wennberg scored the shootout winner.

David Savard, Ryan Johansen and Mark Letestu scored in regulation for the



Chicago Blackhawks' Andrew Shaw (65) loses his footing as he trips over the stick of New York Rangers' Dan Boyle (22) during the third period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, March 18, 2015, in New York. The Blackhawks won the game 1-0.

Associated Press

Blue Jackets (31-35-4), who have won four of their last five.

Derek Roy, Ryan Nugent-

Hopkins and Nail Yakupov had goals for the Oilers (19-39-13), who have lost eight of their last nine games. □

Georgia State stuns Baylor on last-second shot

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — R.J. Hunter kept firing away, eventually lifting 14th-seeded Georgia State over third-seeded Baylor and knocking his father right off his seat with the biggest shot of his life. Hunter's 3-pointer with 2.7 seconds remaining capped a comeback from a 12-point deficit and lifted the Panthers to a 57-56 opening-game victory over the Bears in the NCAA tournament on Thursday. With Ron Hunter working the sideline on a rolling chair less than a week after tearing his left Achilles tendon celebrating Georgia State winning the Sun Belt Conference championship, R.J. shrugged off a poor shooting performance to come through when his team needed him most. "It was a great game, but I'm not going to coach, I'm going to be Dad right now," said Hunter, who fell off his seat and had to be helped up after R.J. made the second of two long 3-pointers that helped the Panthers advance. "This is my son. Proud of him. ... I haven't been able to do that for three years." Baylor (24-10), which got 18 points and 15 rebounds from reserve Taurean



Georgia State guard Ryann Green, left, and Baylor guard Austin Mills, right, battle for the ball during the second half in the second round of the NCAA college basketball tournament, Thursday, March 19, 2015, in Jacksonville, Fla.

Prince, did not score after going up 56-44 on two free throws with 2:54 remaining. Pesky Georgia State's full-court trapping defense forced three critical turnovers and Hunter scored nine straight points, including a 3 that brought chants of "R.J. 3, R.J. 3, R.J. 3" from Panthers fans at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena. The junior guard's steal and layup trimmed Baylor's lead to 56-53, and he drained another NBA-range 3 for the win after the Bears' Kenny Chery missed the front end of a 1-and-1 that could have put the

game away for the Bears. "He just made a contested 3. There was nothing we could do about it. We did our job and he just made it," Chery said. Baylor coach Scott Drew felt the first long 3 got Hunter going, and that the Georgia State star "showed his versatility in different ways" the rest of the way. He was disappointed with how the Bears handled the Panthers' press at the end. Baylor finished with 21 turnovers. "All year we've executed down the stretch," Drew said. "We've been a tough

team, and I feel bad the way the last 5 minutes went." When Prince's desperation heave from beyond halfcourt bounced off the backboard at the buzzer, Ron Hunter sat on his stool holding his head while R.J. and teammates mobbed one another in the middle of the court. "I saw him cannonball off his chair," R.J. said. "I told him, they've got to get him a chair with a back or something because that wasn't going to work." R.J. Hunter finished with 16 points on 5-of-12 shooting. Ryann Green scored 11 points and Markus Crider had 10 for Georgia State, which will play Xavier or Mississippi on Saturday. Ron and R.J. Hunter aren't the only feel-good story lines for the Panthers. Thursday marked Kevin Ware's return to the NCAA Tournament, two years after breaking his leg while playing for eventual national champion Louisville in the Elite Eight. With second-leading scorer Ryan Harrow sidelined by a hamstring injury that's slowed him the past two weeks, Ware started Thursday and scored four points. Hunter vowed to stand as

much as possible on the sideline, and that turned out to be not much at all. Instead he scooted about on a blue rolling chair, his bare toes extending out of the cast on his left foot. With Harrow out and R.J. Hunter off to his slow start, Georgia State fell behind 16-6 before settling down and putting together a 13-3 run to get back in the game. Ware's open jumper gave the Panthers their first lead, 26-24, and Georgia State looked like it might go into the locker room ahead at halftime before Prince made two free throws and a 3-pointer at the buzzer that rimmed out before hitting the backboard and falling through to put Baylor up 33-30. Baylor seemingly took control with Royce O'Neale and Lester Medford making 3-pointers during a 12-1 burst that turned a one-point deficit into a 52-42 lead. Rico Gathers made two free throws to put the Bears up by 12, but they couldn't finish the job. "These kids are so resilient. It's been like this all year," Ron Hunter said. "We kind of laugh because nothing's been given to us. ... This group is just unbelievable. We never gave up." □



Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim gestures during a news conference Thursday, March 19, 2015, in Syracuse, N.Y.

Associated Press

By JOHN KEKIS and MARK FRANK
SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim has always hinted he planned to retire on his own terms. That moment is at hand and his plan remains intact despite NCAA

sanctions marring the end of his career. In an hour-long press conference on Thursday ahead of top teams starting in the NCAA Tournament, Boeheim said that 2018 is the "right time" to retire, but acknowledged

Syracuse's Boeheim: 2018 right to retire, but maybe sooner

that next season could be his last as he and the university appeal punishments for academic and benefits violations. Boeheim said his plan discussed with the university's chancellor is to retire after three more seasons, but that he will take things year by year. "I love coaching, and you can coach as long as you can be effective. I thought I was effective this year. I don't think I was as good as I would have liked to have been, but I think I was effective," said Boeheim, head coach at his alma mater since 1976. "If I'm not effective at the end of next year, I won't coach

after next year. The three-year thing is the outside." Boeheim said retiring after his team reached the Final Four in 2012 would have been ideal, but the timing wasn't right. He said he has told recruits he will be here next season but has no firm plans beyond that. Boeheim said some of the NCAA's allegations laid out in a scathing 94-page report earlier this month are inaccurate. He called the penalties "unduly harsh" and said the reason he planned to stay on as coach was to make sure the program was in good shape. "There was no way I would ever run away from an in-

vestigation in progress," Boeheim said. The NCAA punished Boeheim and Syracuse for academic, benefits and other violations that officials said showed the university had lost control of the athletic department. "Although the infractions report does not find that I had personal involvement in any violations of NCAA rules, the Committee on Infractions has asserted that for the past 10 years I did not promote an atmosphere of compliance within the men's basketball program, and I did not monitor the activities regarding compliance of those within the program." □

Novak Djokovic reaches Indian Wells semifinals via walkover



Andy Murray, of Great Britain, returns a shot to Feliciano Lopez, of Spain, during their match at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament, Thursday, March 19, 2015, in Indian Wells, Calif.

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. (AP)

— Novak Djokovic didn't have to hit a ball to get into the semifinals of the BNP Paribas Open on Thursday when opponent Bernard Tomic withdrew because of a back injury.

Tomic's withdrawal was announced about five hours before he was to play the top-ranked Djokovic, a three-time champion at Indian Wells who won his first three matches in straight sets. He had beaten Tomic each of the three times they've played.

Fans on stadium court jeered the news.

Djokovic's semifinal opponent on Saturday will be fourth-seeded Andy Murray, who defeated No. 12 seed Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4 for his 497th career victory. His wins are the most by any Brit in the Open era, overtaking Tim Henman who had 496 career wins. Murray dropped serve just once against the left-handed Lopez while serving for the match at 5-2 in the second set. He improved to 10-0 against Lopez all-time.

"Every time he came to net I made it very difficult for him," Murray said. "I passed very well, and that

was important, because it meant that he spent more time at the back of the court. When we were in the baseline rallies, I felt like I was able to dictate a lot of those points."

Djokovic owns a 16-8 edge over Murray. They haven't met since the 2013 Wimbledon final, won by Murray.

"He will be totally fresh as well and ready for the semis, so it will be a tough one for me," Murray said. "But I feel like I played well this week and if I can keep that level up and for a sustained period on Saturday, I'll have a chance."

On the women's side, Jelena Jankovic reached the semifinals when qualifier Lesia Tsurenko retired in the second set with a foot injury. Jankovic, the 2010 champion, was only on court for 46 minutes when Tsurenko called it quits trailing the Serb 6-1, 4-1.

"In the second set she started limping, and I saw that she had some problem," the Serb said. "That's the time as well I lost a little bit of my focus. I was kind of looking at what she was doing."

Jankovic will meet the winner of a quarterfinal between defending champion Flavia Pennetta and

24th-seeded Sabine Lisicki, who played later Thursday. Jankovic said she had to double-check to find out when her semifinal is scheduled.

"I had to ask because I was going to do some shopping," she said.

Tsurenko hurt her ankle two days ago when she upset Eugenie Bouchard, one of three seeded players she beat in the desert. After losing the first set against Jankovic, a trainer wrapped her right ankle.

Top-ranked Serena Williams plays No. 3 Simona Halep in a semifinal on Saturday. Williams is back in the desert after ending her 14-year boycott of the tournament she last won as a teenager in 2001.

Tomic had gotten off to a strong start this year, reaching the quarterfinals at six of the seven tournaments he's played. The exception was the Australian Open, where he lost in the fourth round.

The Australian defeated sixth-seeded David Ferrer in straight sets in the third round here, Tomic's first win over a Top 10 player since July 2013.

Tomic beat Aussie teenager Thanasi Kokkinakis in three sets in the fourth round Wednesday and

then complained of an aching wisdom tooth. His back has been bothering him since a tournament in Memphis in early February. "It's not easy when you have two parts of the body that are like really in pain," he said.

Tomic went to hit Thursday in preparation for his match and could barely move. His back ached and the right side of his face and neck were inflamed because

of the tooth, which he has been taking medication to lessen the infection.

He said he would try to have his tooth removed next week in Miami, and wasn't sure if he would still play in the two-week tournament there. Tomic said he's been advised to rest his back for five or six days. "I'm playing very confident, and hopefully the next time I play I can be 100 percent," he said. □



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THE GUNMAN

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35
FRI 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:05
SAT 2:05 | 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 2:05 | 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35



SHAILENE WOODLEY | ANSEL ELGORT

INSURGENT

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

3D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:25 | 9:30
FRI-SAT 4:25 | 9:30 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 4:25 | 9:30

2D VERSION
MON-THURS 6:55 | 9:00
FRI 6:55 | 9:00 | 11:35
SAT 1:55 | 6:55 | 9:00 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 1:55 | 6:55 | 9:00



LILY JAMES | CATE BLANCHETT

CINDERELLA

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55
FRI 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55 | 11:25
SAT 2:15 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55 | 11:25
SUN & HOL 2:15 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55

SPANISH

MON-THURS 5:10
FRI 5:10 | 10:10
SAT 2:40 | 5:10 | 10:10
SUN & HOL 2:40 | 5:10



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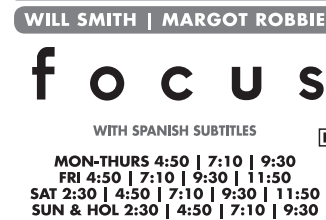
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 3:55 | 6:30
FRI-SAT 3:55 | 6:30
SUN & HOL 3:55 | 6:30

RUN ALL NIGHT

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25
FRI 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25 | 11:50
SAT 2:10 | 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:10 | 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25



VINCE VAUGHN | DAVE FRANCO

f o c u s

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

MON-THURS 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35

FRI 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SAT 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35

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NBA Capsules

Warriors beat Hawks 114-95 in clash of NBA leaders

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, California (AP)

— Harrison Barnes had 25 points, Andre Iguodala added 21 points and six assists, and the Golden State Warriors cruised past the Atlanta Hawks 114-95 on Wednesday night in a matchup of the NBA's top two teams.

Stephen Curry had 16 points and 12 assists, Draymond Green contributed 18 points and Andrew Bogut grabbed 14 rebounds as balanced Golden State maintained the best record in the league (54-13) with its 10th straight win at home.

The Hawks, looking fatigued and trailing big by the fourth quarter, were denied again in a chance to clinch their first division title since the 1993-94 season as Washington won at Utah.

Paul Millsap and DeMarre Carroll each scored 16 points and Carroll had 12 boards for cold-shooting Atlanta (53-15), which had won 10 of 12 and three in a row but shot 35.6 percent from the floor.

CAVALIERS 117, NETS 92

CLEVELAND (AP) — J.R. Smith and Timofey Mozgov



Portland Trail Blazers' Chris Kaman (35) attempts to get a shot as Miami Heat's Michael Beasley, center, and Chris Andersen (11) defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, March 18, 2015, in Miami. The Heat defeated the Trail Blazers 108-104.

scored 17 points apiece, Kyrie Irving had 10 assists and Cleveland shook off a slow start to beat Brooklyn for its 14th straight win at home.

LeBron James added 16 points for the Cavs, who had seven players score in double figures. Cleveland trailed by 13 in the first quarter before going on a 30-8 run and didn't look back.

Associated Press
Kevin Love returned after a two-game break to rest his back and finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds. Deron Williams scored 20 to lead the Nets, who are running out of games as they claw to get into the playoffs.

HEAT 108, TRAIL BLAZERS 104

MIAMI (AP) — Dwyane Wade scored 15 of his 32 points in the fourth quar-

ter, including a jumper with 13.6 seconds left to break a tie and help Miami beat Portland.

Wade made 13 of 26 shots for the Heat, who were down 11 shortly after half-time. Luol Deng had 24 points on 4-for-4 shooting from 3-point range for Miami, which got 20 points and 11 assists from Goran Dragic and a 12-point, 10-rebound night from Hassan Whiteside.

LaMarcus Aldridge led Portland with 34 points and 12 rebounds. Damian Lillard scored 17 for the Trail Blazers, who fell a half-game behind Houston in the race for third in the Western Conference.

THUNDER 122, CELTICS 118
OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Russell Westbrook scored 36 points to help Oklahoma City snap Boston's five-game winning streak.

Westbrook, the NBA's leading scorer, also had 10 assists, five rebounds and five steals. Enes Kanter had 22 points and 10 rebounds, and Anthony Morrow added 20 points for Oklahoma City, which moved a half-game ahead of New Orleans in the race for the final Western Conference

playoff spot.

Marcus Smart, who played college ball at Oklahoma State, led Boston with a career-high 25 points. Kelly Olynyk and Brandon Bass each added 20 points for the Celtics.

Boston shot 64 percent in the first half, the highest percentage the Thunder have allowed in a half this season. Oklahoma City held the Celtics to 42 percent shooting after the break.

RAPTORS 105, TIMBERWOLVES 100

TORONTO (AP) — Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and 15 rebounds, DeMar DeRozan scored 21 and Toronto won its 11th straight home game over short-handed Minnesota. Terrence Ross added 15 points as the Raptors won for the third time in five games. They spoiled the Toronto debut of 2014 top draft pick Andrew Wiggins, who grew up in the city's north suburbs.

The Raptors have won seven straight meetings with Minnesota and haven't lost at home to the Timberwolves since dropping a 108-97 decision on Jan. 21, 2004. □

Rockets should get center Dwight Howard back soon

KRISTIE RIEKEN

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Rockets center Dwight Howard said Wednesday that his injured right knee is feeling better and he's close to returning to the court after a nearly two-month layoff.

Howard, who has missed the last 23 games due to swelling in the knee, returned to practice in the last week. He wouldn't give a timetable for his return, but his comments seemed to indicate it would be soon.

"I had a good eight weeks of really training and working on my body and mentally I feel good, physically I feel great so I can't wait to

get back on the floor," he said.

Howard had a bone marrow aspirate injection in his knee on Feb. 9. Since then, he's gone through a grueling rehabilitation process that has included spending an inordinate amount of time on the treadmill.

"We did some extremely tough workouts on the treadmill. Anytime anyone says treadmill, I lose it," Howard joked. "I don't think anybody understands what they had me doing on the treadmill. I was just begging them: 'Can I just play so I don't have to do this?' Rehab is harder than the actual practice and all of that stuff."

He said his knee no longer

hurts, but that it's been a little achy in the past few days as he's started doing more full-contact work on the court.

"They've been doing a lot of different things to get me in shape, to get me moving and running," he said. "Each day they've been building up the test to see how far my body can go without breaking down or swelling in my knee or pain."

Howard has played just 32 games this season, averaging 16.3 points, 11 rebounds and 1.4 blocks a game. It's the most games Howard has missed in his 11-year NBA career and it has been tough on him.

"My knee is something



Houston Rockets' Dwight Howard shouts to his team as he sits on the bench in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz on Thursday, March 12, 2015, in Salt Lake City. The Jazz won 109-91.

Associated Press

where I have to look out for the long run," the 29-year-old Howard said. "It's not just about this season but the rest of my career. As much as I would love to play through all the injuries, I just have to realize that

the most important thing is my health."

The Rockets have gone 15-8 during this stretch without him and entered Wednesday's games in fourth place in the Western Conference. □



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Big in Asia, Line app hopes cute factor will win worldwide

YOUKYUNG LEE

AP Technology Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty: Move over. And make way for laidback Brown bear and his irrepressible girlfriend Cony the bunny. Once just digital stickers that users of mobile messaging app Line send to each other like emoticons, the bear, the bunny and their seven friends will soon be unleashed through stores, virtual reality and possibly an animated film. For smartphone users in Asia where most of Line's 181 million monthly users are located, the characters are as familiar as old school icons such as Hello Kitty and Disney's animated stars. They are not well known in America or Europe but owner Line Corp. hopes to change that.

It plans to open 100 stores selling Brown dolls and other cute "Line Friends" paraphernalia worldwide over the next three years. It has already opened two stores in Seoul and its first Shanghai and New York stores will open this year. Though partly an accidental strategy, the company says the bricks-and-mortar presence will draw more users to the app and help replicate its rapid Asian success in other regions. It will also give the company a backdoor into China, where Line is blocked along with other foreign messaging apps and social media sites.

"We never intended to do a character business," Yoon Sunmin, who oversees Line's character business, said in an interview that was the first time the company has outlined its merchandizing plans in detail. "It exploded by accident," he said, drinking coffee from a paper

cup emblazoned with the dazed face of Brown.

Visitors to the newly opened flagship shop in Seoul's trendy Gangnam district screamed with delight when they saw an outsized Brown bear greeting them near the entrance of the three-story store. Locals and tourists from Vietnam, China and Hong Kong queued to

are mostly in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, India and Spain. They also set Line apart from the bare bones interface of rival WhatsApp, which was bought by Facebook for about \$22 billion. Line is worth about \$18 billion based on revenue from monthly users, according to Marcello Ahn, a fund manager at Quad Investment Man-

the depth of the interaction is different," Yoon said. Stickers also made Line the rare mobile messenger that rakes in cash, first by selling stickers for \$2 a pack to mobile phone users and later by adding new businesses such as games and a taxi hailing service. Users can now sell stickers they make themselves to other Line users. There are

er ventures will put it in a strong starting position in case authorities ever relent on their blocking of the app.

The first Line Friends store in China will open in Shanghai's Xintiandi shopping district in May, selling Brown dolls, Cony pens, Sally mugs and other goods such as kitchen utensils, stationary, jewelry and toys.

"We hope to resume the Line app service someday" in China, Yoon said. "If the Line app is resumed at a time when our characters are well known, it would be a powerful launch. We hope that in the countries where the Line app is not used actively, Line characters would promote the app."

Apart from stores, Line is in talks to open a virtual reality amusement park in China. The first such park, where visitors can explore a virtual space with Line characters, will open in Bangkok this summer.

Line is also negotiating with Hollywood producers to turn its cute characters into an animated film for theaters or series for TV.

Line spun off Line Friends earlier this month to operate the character-related business independently from the company's app business.

Though analysts are skeptical about the app's future in China where Tencent's WeChat is dominant, they say the merchandizing business could be effective in the U.S. and in Latin America.

"There is clearly an opportunity to take existing mobile properties to other channels and generate revenues," said Jack Kent, director of mobile media research at IHS Technology. □



In this March 16, 2015 photo, tourists take their souvenir photos with an outsized Line's character Brown bear at the Line Friends flagship shop in Seoul, South Korea.

take a picture with Brown and other human-size cut-out Line characters, as if they were pop stars.

Evelyn Tan, a 27-year-old from northwestern China, and her friend Keira Yi, 23, from Beijing, said they don't use Line in China but came to look at Brown and other cute dolls.

"I have some friends from Taiwan and they use Line," said Tan. "The stickers. They are so cute."

Larger and more expressive than emoticons, the stickers have been a draw card for Line whose users

agement.

The popularity of the Brown and Cony stickers has also shaped a new trend in mobile communication.

Instead of typing messages, many users simply tapped a sticker showing a coy-looking Brown sitting on a toilet or eating a bowl of ramen. Users began to associate themselves with certain characters and the lineup now includes a bespectacled middle-aged man named Boss and James, a blond narcissist.

"People express their emotion with the characters so

Associated Press
more than 200,000 people around the world who do that.

Line Corp.'s net profit jumped 50 percent in 2014 to 126 billion won (\$112 million) on revenue of 670 billion won (\$594 million), according to its parent, South Korea's Naver Corp. The app was launched in June 2011.

Line also cashed in on the rock star popularity of its animal characters through mobile games and an animated TV show in Japan. In China, the company hopes the stores and oth-

Gauge of US economy up modest 0.2% in February

M. CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An index designed to predict the future health of the economy rose by a modest amount for a second straight month, indicating the economy's momentum may have slowed. The New York-based Conference Board said its index of leading indicators rose 0.2 percent last month, matching the January increase. The gains in both months were the smallest

since the index rose by just 0.1 percent in August.

Analysts said that the smaller increases over the past two months may be signaling a period of more moderate activity.

"Weakness in the industrial sector and business investment is holding economic growth back despite improvements in labor markets and consumer confidence," Conference Board economist Ataman Ozyildirim said Thursday.

The leading index is com-

posed of 10 forward-pointing indicators. Seven of the 10 indicators increased in February with the biggest support coming from the spread on interest rates, gains in stock prices and an increase in building permits. The three indicators which subtracted from growth were weekly unemployment benefit applications, weekly manufacturing hours and the index for new orders tracked by the Institute for Supply Management.

Growth, as measured by the gross domestic product, slowed to an annual rate of just 2.2 percent in the October-December quarter with many economists expecting activity in the current quarter will be around that level. Forecasters expect a bounce back to growth rates around 3 percent for the rest of the year based on a belief that strong employment gains will boost consumer spending, which accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. □

JOBS REPORT

Applications or unemployment hardly changed

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits basically held steady last week, as the job market continues to outpace broader economic growth. The Labor Department said Thursday that weekly applications for unemployment aid rose slightly by 1,000 to a seasonally adjusted 291,000. Jobless claims have been subdued for the past two weeks after winter storms caused them to spike at the end of February due to closed schools and construction sites.

The four-week average, a less volatile measure, increased 2,250 to 304,750. That average has dropped 7.5 percent over the past year.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs. When employers keep their workers, it is generally a sign that they expect continued economic growth and will likely increase hiring. Applications below 300,000 are typically consistent with healthy job gains.

The relatively modest number of applications contrast with the Federal Reserve's view announced Wednesday that economic growth has lost some momentum since the start of 2015.

"These data appear to defy" the Fed's statement, said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. "So far, though, we see no sign of slower hiring either." The historically low level of benefit applications has been matched by a surge in hiring. Employers have added an average of 288,000 jobs a month since December, including a net new 295,000 jobs in February. The gains have cut the unemployment rate to 5.5 percent from 6.7 percent a year ago.

Despite the job growth, other parts of the economy have stumbled during February's harsh snowstorms. □

US stock market sinks as crude oil resumes slide

MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Another drop in oil prices helped drive the stock market to a loss on Thursday, as major indexes gave up their gains from the day before. Chevron, Exxon Mobil and other energy companies led stocks down.

Benchmark U.S. oil sank 70 cents to close at \$43.96 a barrel in New York, extending a slump that has

oil will bottom out until a company or a country flinches and cuts production. Right now producers are still pumping as much as they can."

It was Apple's first day as a member of the Dow Jones industrial average, as the maker of iPhones, iPads and other gadgets replaced AT&T. Goldman Sachs also took Visa's title as the most expensive stock among the blue

trial average lost 117.16 points, or 0.6 percent, to 17,959.03. The Nasdaq composite rose 9.55 points, or 0.2 percent, to 4,992.38. The economic news out Thursday gave investors little encouragement to drive stocks up. An index aimed at gauging the economy's momentum rose by a slight amount for a second straight month, and the number of people seeking U.S. unemploy-

ing 5 percent or more in the coming months. "Why do we think that? Because what hit the fourth quarter hit in the first quarter: the stronger dollar, the decline in energy prices and the weather."

Any turbulence shouldn't last long, Orlando said, arguing that low gas prices could lead to a surge in consumer spending later in the year. "At some point, people have to say maybe energy prices will stay low and so we'll ratchet up our spending," he said.

The stock market surged Wednesday after the Federal Reserve signaled that it wasn't in a hurry to raise interest rates. Years of ultra-low rates has helped lift stock and bond prices by keeping the cost of borrowing cheap. The Fed has held its benchmark interest rate close to zero since 2008.

Major markets in Europe were mixed. Germany's DAX fell 0.2 percent, while France's CAC 40 edged up 0.1 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2 percent. Back in the U.S., Nucor, a steel company, cut its forecast for quarterly earnings, blaming rising imports for driving steel prices down. Nucor plunged \$3.17, or 6 percent, to \$46.10.

Transocean announced late Wednesday that it would scrap four drilling rigs that it had tried to sell, requiring the company to take a charge against its earnings. Transocean sank \$1.09, or 7 percent, to \$14.16. □



Trader Peter Tuchman adjusts his headset as he works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, March 19, 2015. Stocks edged lower in trading, giving up some of the gains they made the day before.
(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

slashed prices by more than half over the past year.

"Given the big drop that we've had the big question is, when does oil hit bottom?" said Jeff Carbone, a senior partner at Cornerstone Financial Partners in Charlotte, North Carolina. "I don't think

chips. Because the Dow weighs its 30 companies by their share price instead of their market value, a stock split for Visa pushed the payment processor off its perch.

The Standard & Poor's 500 fell 10.23 points, or 0.5 percent, to 2,089.27.

The Dow Jones indus-

ment benefits held steady. The Labor Department reported that weekly applications for unemployment aid edged up by 1,000 to 291,000 last week.

Phil Orlando, chief equity strategist at Federated Investors, thinks the market could hit a rough patch soon, with the S&P 500 slid-

For Poorer and Richer



ROSS DOUTHAT
© 2015 New York Times

Some arguments are hard to settle but are too important to avoid. Here is one: whether the social crisis among America's poor and working class - the collapse of the two-parent family, the weakening of communal ties - is best understood as a problem of economics or of culture.

This argument recurs whenever there's a compelling depiction of that crisis. In 2012, the catalyst was Charles Murray's "Coming Apart," with its portrait of the post-1960s divide between two fictional communities - upper-class "Belmont" and blue-collar "Fishtown." Now it's Robert Putnam's "Our Kids," which uses the author's Ohio hometown to trace the divergent fortunes of its better-educated and less-educated families.

Murray belongs to the libertarian right, Putnam to the communitarian left, so Putnam is more hopeful that economic policy can address the problems he describes. But "Our Kids" is attuned to culture's feedback loops, and it offers grist for social conservatives who suspect it would take a cultural counterrevolution to bring back the stable working class families of an earlier America.

That idea makes some people on the left angry. As they see it, it's money and only money that Murray's Fishtown and Putnam's hometown lack and need. And it's unchecked capitalism and Republican stinginess, not the sexual revolution, that has devastated working-class society over the last few decades. Fight poverty, redistribute wealth, and you'll revive family and community - it's as simple as that.

Their argument gets some things right. The U.S. economy isn't performing as well as it once did for less-skilled workers. Certain regions - like Putnam's Ohio - have suffered painfully from deindustrialization. The shift to a service economy has favored women but has made low-skilled men less marriageable. The decline of unions has weakened professional stability and bargaining power for some workers.

And yet, for all these disturbances and shifts, lower-income Americans have more money, experience less poverty, and receive far more safety-net support than their grandparents ever did. Over all, material conditions have improved, not worsened, across the period when their communities have come apart.

Between 1979 and 2010, for instance, the average after-tax income for the poorest quintile of U.S. households rose from \$14,800 to \$19,200; for the second-poorest quintile, it rose

from \$29,900 to \$39,100.

Meanwhile, per-person anti-poverty spending at the state and federal level increased sixfold between 1968 and 2008 - and that's excluding Medicare, unemployment benefits and Social Security. Despite some conservative skepticism, this spending did reduce the poverty rate (though probably more so after welfare reform). One plausible estimate suggests the rate fell from 26 percent in 1967 to 15 percent in 2012, and child poverty fell as well.

These trends simply do not match the left-wing depiction of a working class devastated by Reaganomics. Nor does the long-term trend in insurance coverage, or per-student spending, or other data. The left sometimes claims that the income instability of working Americans is unprecedented, for instance - but a 2007 Congressional Budget Office estimate found "little change in earnings variability" over the preceding decades.

This is a dense debate whose surface I can only skim. (Inequality as well as absolute income enters into it, as does immigration, cost inflation for key goods - including weddings! - and more.)

But the basic point is this: In a substantially poorer American past with a much thinner safety net, lower-income Americans found a way to cultivate monogamy, fidelity, sobriety and thrift to an extent that they have not in our richer, higher-spending present.

So however much money matters, something else is clearly going on.

The post-1960s cultural revolution isn't the only possible "something else." But when you have a cultural earthquake that makes society dramatically more permissive and you subsequently get dramatic social fragmentation among vulnerable populations, denying that there is any connection looks a lot like denying the nose in front of your face.

But recognizing that culture shapes behavior and that moral frameworks matter doesn't require thundering denunciations of the moral choices of the poor. Instead, our upper class should be judged first - for being too solipsistic to recognize that its present ideal of "safe" permissiveness works (sort of) only for the privileged, and for failing to take any moral responsibility (in the schools it runs, the mass entertainments it produces, the social agenda it favors) for the effects of permissiveness on the less-savvy, the less protected, the kids who don't have helicopter parents turning off the television or firewalled the porn.

This judgment would echo Leonard Cohen: "Now you can say that I've grown bitter but of this you may be sure / The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor."

And without dismissing money's impact on the social fabric, it would raise the possibility that what's on those channels sometimes matters more. □



Syracuse, Boeheim and the NCAA



JOE NOCERA
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There are few organizations that can make a mountain out of a molehill like the NCAA. Believe it or not, the scathing report it issued in early March, accusing Syracuse University and its basketball coach, Jim Boeheim, of a pattern of cheating, is a pretty good example.

I say "believe it or not" because to read about the report is to get the impression that Boeheim oversaw a program that was incorrigibly corrupt - a "decade-deep sewer," as Pat Forde of Yahoo Sports characterized it.

This is surely the impression the NCAA hoped to convey. "Over the course of a decade," the Committee on Infractions wrote, Syracuse committed violations including "academic fraud, instances of extra benefits," cash payouts to players, etc. It accused Boeheim of failing to monitor his staff and claimed that the school showed a "lack of control over its athletic program."

When the NCAA makes that last accusation, you can be sure it will be accompanied with stiff penalties. Among other things, Syracuse's basketball team was put on probation for five years. It will lose some scholarships. Boeheim is to be suspended for part of next season, and he has been stripped of more than 100 wins.

I hold no brief for Boeheim. Coaches like him, who are bigger than the universities that

employ them, are a problem for anyone who believes that a university's academic mission is more important than its basketball team. But neither should the NCAA use its enforcement powers to cut such a coach down to size just because, well, it can. Especially when it hasn't delivered the goods.

Boeheim appears to have made two terrible personnel moves. In 2005, he hired Stan Kessel to oversee the basketball team's academic progress. And, in 2009, he recruited a 7-foot-tall Brazilian basketball player named Fab Melo. Kessel appears to have been a bad actor who monitored players' class work by getting control of the athletes' email accounts, which he then used to communicate with professors, supposedly without letting the professors know it was him.

Melo, a native Portuguese speaker who still had difficulty with English, was one of those athletes who simply didn't belong on a university campus - yet another big problem with college sports that the NCAA is hardly in a position to remedy. Basketball was the only reason he was attending Syracuse.

Halfway through his sophomore season, Melo was declared ineligible because of poor grades. A professor agreed to allow him to submit a paper that might improve his grade and get him back on the court. According to the NCAA, Kessel, along with a receptionist, gave Melo "unauthorized assistance" with the paper, which he submitted the very next day. It appears likely, in fact, that one of them wrote it.

That's a major transgression, not just of NCAA rules, but also of Syracuse's academic standards. The university has not shirked from the seriousness of the offense, describing it as "wrongful conduct." Both Kessel and the receptionist were let go long before the NCAA completed its investigation.

What else? Nearly a decade ago, three football players received course credit for an internship they hadn't earned.

So now we're up to four cases of academic fraud in 10 years, only one of which was committed by a basketball player. (By comparison, in the 2013-14 school year alone, Syracuse students racked up 184 charges of academic dishonesty.)

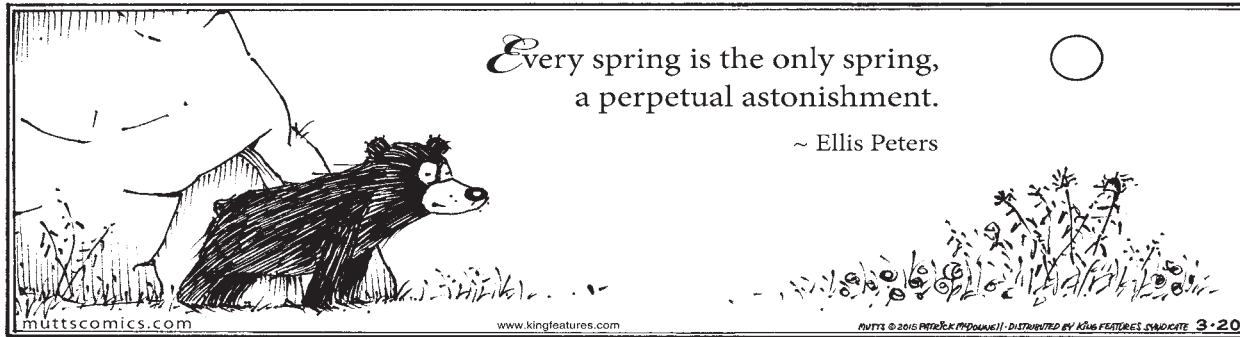
Also: Some players were involved in charity benefits without getting approval. A booster was given too many complimentary tickets. Years ago, three players were paid by a local YMCA for what the NCAA says was volunteer work and at least one of the players insists was a summer job. "On one occasion in 2004," the report actually says, a coach drove a Syracuse athlete 45 miles. Seriously?

Finally, although the NCAA believes that several other athletes committed academic fraud, it couldn't bring that charge because the university, going through the same process it would with any other student, concluded that it didn't have enough evidence. So instead, the NCAA tagged the athletes with receiving "extra benefits," because, you know, something bad might have happened even if it couldn't be proved. Actual proof has never mattered much in NCAA investigations.

I have dwelled on this report because it illustrates that despite the blows it has taken recently - in court and elsewhere - the NCAA remains not only a powerful institution but one that is all too willing to abuse that power. To nail Syracuse's basketball program - for who knows what reason - it had to pad one serious 2012 offense with a handful of extraneous, at times silly, allegations that had occurred, here and there, over the course of a decade.

Syracuse, concluded the NCAA, violated the association's "fundamental core values." Not really. Very soon, the annual March Madness college basketball tournament will be upon us. The NCAA will reap somewhere on the order of \$800 million. Now, we're talking core values. □

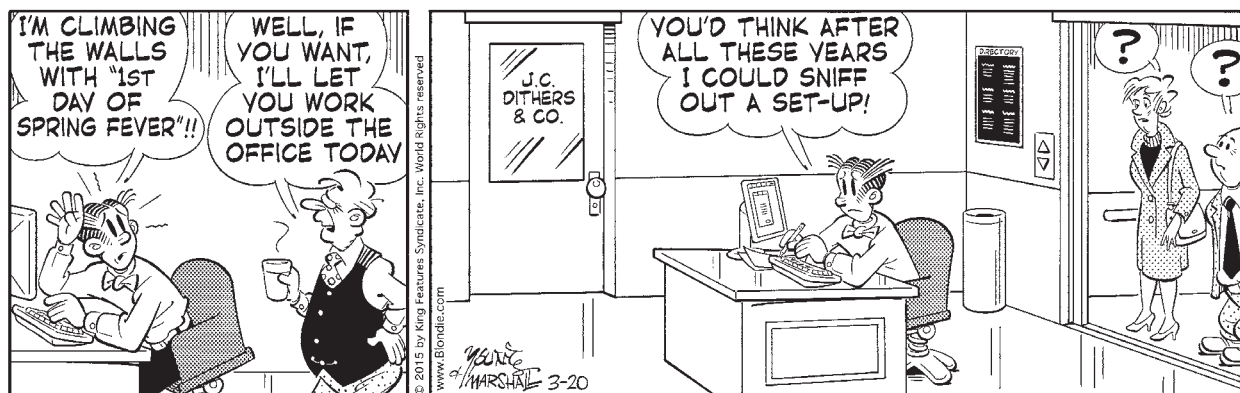
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



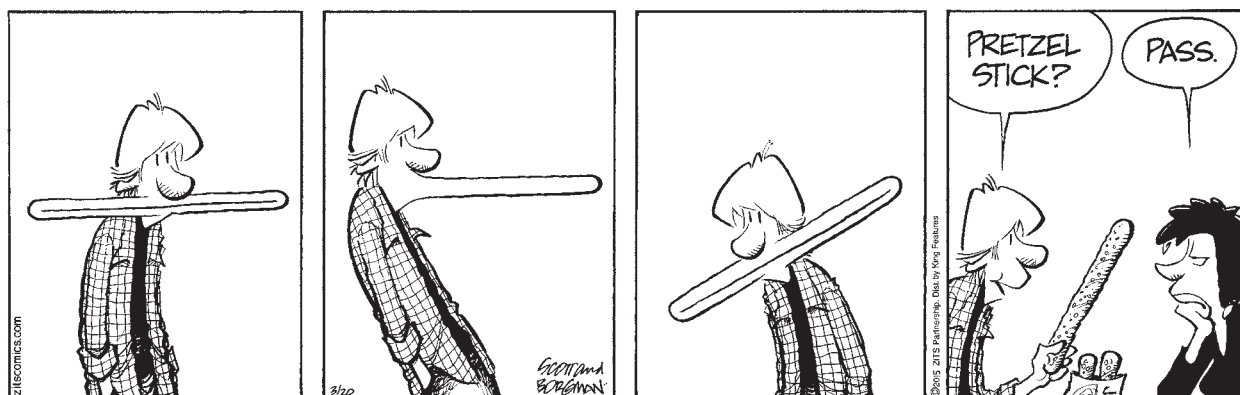
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

3			8		6	1		2
		6						
9				3			5	
6								7
		1				3		
5								8
	4			8				9
						8		
1		3	2		7			6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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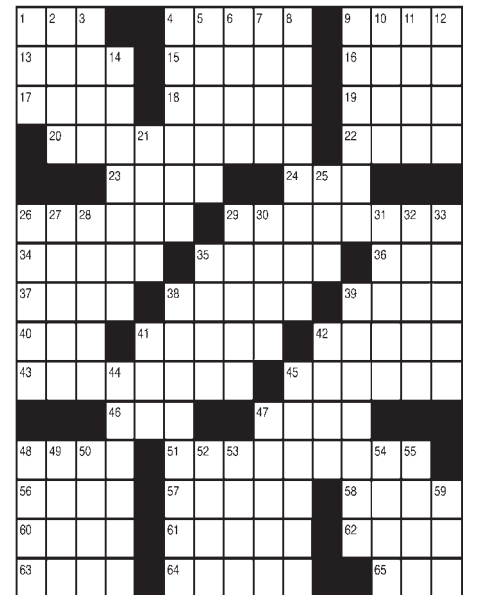
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

5	1	2	8	7	6	3	9	4
4	6	8	9	2	3	7	1	5
7	3	9	5	1	4	2	6	8
6	2	3	1	5	9	4	8	7
1	4	7	3	8	2	6	5	9
8	9	5	6	4	7	1	3	2
9	7	6	4	3	8	5	2	1
3	5	4	2	9	1	8	7	6
2	8	1	7	6	5	9	4	3

ACROSS

- Male child
- Hillside
- Commanded
- Fills with wonder
- Nat and Natalie
- Mountain goat
- Actress Patricia
- Thesaurus compiler
- Delight
- Deadlock
- Marries
- Pekoe and oolong
- Inventor — Whitney
- Haughtiness
- Harming
- Archaeologist's workplace
- Evans and Robertson
- Baby talk
- Engagement symbol
- Silenced
- Too
- Big game
- Records
- Sheets of ice on the ocean
- Abandoned
- Gloomy
- ...Thurs., Fri., ...
- Enjoy a feast
- Stylish
- Remorseful
- Sworn statement
- Banishment
- "How ___ Is the Ocean"; Irving Berlin song
- Ascend
- Ravi Shankar's instrument
- 2015, for one
- Sketch
- Remains
- Arid



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/20/15

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

PLOY	SHADE	SLAM
HONE	WEIRD	MAXI
IOTA	ERRED	ONES
STORIES	AIMLESS	
	NOT TREED	
ADIEU	FRY	DETER
MIND	MIA	CAROLE
ADD	ARRIVAL	PAN
SNIFFS	NAB	MITT
START	KEN	LACES
	EERIE	MAC
SPHERES	TABASCO	
WOOD	EMBER	BLOW
ALSO	LEADS	ROME
POEM	STASH	EBBS

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3/20/15

DOWN

- ___ Diego, CA
- Has bills to pay
- Tidy

- Hilarious person
- Weaving frames
- Gymnast — Korb
- Actress Amanda —
- Highly respected
- Mucky-muck
- Qualified
- Owner's paper
- Former spouses
- Scheduling
- Silly as a ___
- 25 ___ Vegas, NV
- Blundered
- Sneakiness
- Pig sounds
- Went out with
- Tavern drinks
- Traditional Eskimo home
- Snouts
- Silly as a ___
- Bamboozle
- Part of a bed

- "So soon?"
- Refrain syllable
- Arial or Times New Roman
- Shun
- Ore seekers
- Postpone
- Drape puller
- Long-running Broadway play
- "___ Small World"
- Way out
- Pocket bread
- Have to have
- Sorrowful drop
- Use a crowbar

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Sky gazers flock to remote islands for total solar eclipse

CATHERINE GASCHKA

Associated Press

TORSHAVN, Faeroe Islands

(AP) — For months, even years, hotels on the remote Faeroe Islands have been fully booked by fans who don't want to miss an almost three-minute-long astronomical sensation. Now the sky gazers just hope the clouds will blow away so they can fully experience Friday's total solar eclipse. Scores of eclipse chasers and scientists have invaded the archipelago armed with telescopes, cameras and glasses for safe direct solar viewing ahead of the big event.

The weather forecast is better more than 2,000 kilometers (1,270 miles) to the northeast, in the Arctic islands of Svalbard, where spectators can hope for a clear day. The full eclipse will only be seen in a narrow path across the northern hemisphere, reaching the Faeroes at 0945 GMT (5:45 a.m. EDT) on Friday.

"This is our 10th total eclipse. We love to watch them and being able to look at the corona with your eyes in the middle of the eclipse is really an exciting moment, to experience the diamond rings coming and going," said Les Anderson, a 60-year-old from San Diego, California, in the Faeroe capital of Torshavn.

The population of the 18 rocky islands between



Items of eclipse merchandise are displayed for sale in a store, in Torshavn, the capital city of the Faeroe Islands, Wednesday, March 18, 2015.

Associated Press

Scotland and Iceland has swelled by approximately 10,000 for a few days from its usual 48,000 souls.

"There has never, never been so many people on the islands before," said Theresa Kreutzmann, head of the tourism office in Torshavn.

The two best places to fully experience the total solar eclipse are the Faeroes, where the moon covers the sun completely for 2 minutes 45 seconds, and Svalbard, more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) north of the Norwegian mainland,

where it will be 15 seconds shorter.

A partial solar eclipse can be seen across Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. Britain's Meteorological Office says 95 percent of the sun will be covered in the Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetland Islands.

Although Faeroe camping sites have opened ahead of time for those willing to brave nighttime temperatures of around 1.5 degrees Celsius (35 degrees Fahrenheit), authorities on Svalbard have reminded last-minute visitors that bringing

a sleeping bag and finding a cozy corner for the night is not an option. The thermometer there hovers around minus 15 degrees Celsius (5 degrees Fahrenheit). And then there are the polar bears, which roam freely — meaning that people need to carry firearms when moving outside settlements.

On average, three bears are shot in self-defense every year on Svalbard with an estimated polar bear population of 3,000 — roughly the same as the human population. Visitors

have been attacked. Just Thursday, a bear attacked a tent in which a Czech tourist was sleeping, slightly injuring him. In 2011, a British teenager was fatally mauled by a bear that attacked the tent he was sleeping in.

The bears aren't an issue in the Faeroes.

"We don't have polar bears here," laughed Torstein Christiansen, tourist chief in Torshavn. He said the islands' main problems are traffic and the treacherous and sudden fog that can quickly wrap the islands and its steep cliffs.

Finnur Johansen, 82, is eagerly awaiting the total solar eclipse. He recalls the one in 1954 when Faeroe animals were fooled by the sudden darkness.

"I remember the reaction of the birds. They go to sleep," Johansen said. "The hen, they go into hen house, under the perch, and slept there with the head under the wing."

If eclipse-chasers have been preparing for years, local authorities have been doing the same, Christiansen said. Authorities have posted online information to help visitors find accommodation and the best spots to be for the eclipse. Solar eclipse merchandising — including books and toy puffins in eclipse T-shirts — are on sale, hotel prices have risen and a ferry boat has been moored in Torshavn to house visitors. □

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In this Aug. 15, 2014, file photo, Pennsylvania's Mo'ne Davis delivers in the fifth inning against Tennessee during a baseball game in United States pool play at the Little League World Series tournament in South Williamsport, Pa.

Associated Press

Disney Channel plans biopic of pitching prodigy Mo'ne Davis

NEW YORK (AP) — Little League pitching sensation Mo'ne Davis will be the subject of a Disney Channel movie. The network says development is underway on the biographical film, titled "Throw Like Mo." It will tell the story of the 13-year-old who last summer made history as the first girl to pitch a shutout in the Little League World Series. A member of Philadelphia's Taney Dragons, Davis then became the first Little Leaguer to make the cover of Sports Illustrated magazine. She will serve as a consult on the movie, which she hopes will encourage viewers to believe that dreams can really come true. Disney Channel didn't specify an airdate or cast. But Davis says she can't wait to get started. □

Penn & Teller to return to Broadway this summer

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Penn & Teller are hoping they'll be able to make tickets disappear on Broadway this summer. The comedy-and-magic duo said Thursday they will play the Marquis Theatre from July 7-Aug. 16. Tickets go on sale on April 16. Penn Jillette, the taller, louder part of the group, and Raymond Teller, his small, silent partner — have been mixing comedy with magic since they teamed up in 1975. The duo regularly performs in Las Vegas and has appeared on numerous TV shows, including a Showtime program that debunks pop-culture



In this July 21, 2011 file photo, Penn Jillette, left, and Raymond Teller pose for a portrait at the LMT Music Lodge during Comic Con in San Diego.

Associated Press

myths and pop-psychology theories. They made their off-Broadway debut in 1985 and first played Broadway in 1987.

They returned to Broadway in 1991 with "The Refrigerator Tour." They currently have a show at The Rio in Las Vegas. □



In this image released by Fox, Jussie Smollett, left, and Terrence Howard appear in a scene from the season one finale of "Empire."

Associated Press

Finale of 'Empire' draws 17.6 million viewers

DAVID BAUDER
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With a standard-setting finale to its first season reaching 17.6 million viewers, Fox's music business drama "Empire" has proven that it's still pos-

sible for broadcast television to create big hits.

That's how many people watched the second of two one-hour episodes on Wednesday night. The first hour was seen by 15.8 million people, the Nielsen company said.

When "Empire" debuted in January, its first-night audience was a healthy but not remarkable 9.9 million. It proceeded to gain viewers for every single succeeding episode through the 12th and final one Wednesday night, a feat Nielsen said is unmatched in two dozen years of estimating viewership through electronic people meters.

On the final episode, music family patriarch Lucious Lyon, played by actor Terrence Howard, learns that he doesn't actually have ALS as he had thought. He also anoints middle son Jamal as the heir to the family business, angering his other sons Andre and Hakeem in the process.

Not since "Grey's Anatomy" in 2005 has a television drama reached so many people for the last episode of its premiere season, Nielsen said.

The viewership estimate doesn't take into account the number of people who will see the show via Internet streams, video on demand and on DVR in the coming days and weeks. Based on viewership gains seen by past "Empire" episodes, Fox estimates that in a month's time more than 27 million people will have watched Wednesday's last episode.

Facebook said some 4.2 million people accounted for 15.8 million posts, shares and comments on the finale.

The "Empire" success puts the rookie show among CBS' "NCIS" and AMC's "The Walking Dead" in drama popularity this season. It's a boon for Fox, which has seen former juggernaut "American Idol" continue to recede in popularity and few other shows connecting with viewers. It's heartening for television programmers in general to see a program become a hit at a time most new programs fail.

"Empire" will be back for a second season, although Fox hasn't said whether it will be in the fall or winter. □

Russell Simmons plans for a hip-hop musical 'The Scenario'

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Music mogul Russell Simmons is producing a brand new stage musical that will celebrate three generations of hip-hop, from Run DMC to Kanye West.

Simmons said Thursday that "The Scenario" will feature an original story written by author and hip-hop historian Dan Charnas, author of "The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop." He's aiming to premiere it in New York City in late 2016.

"People will sing along and leave happy," Simmons said. "So many of these songs will reach everybody in the audience. That almost never happens."

Simmons, who won a 2003 Tony for producing "Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam," said the new musical will have a love story, contain a fight-the-power element and be a "celebration of hip-hop." It's still being written and song selection will likely be a tough task.

"There are so many great



In this Feb. 6, 2015 file photo, Russell Simmons presents the Vanguard Award on stage at the 46th NAACP Image Awards in Pasadena, Calif. **Associated Press**

songs!" he said. "Do I need something from Kurtis Blow? From Drake? I just don't know. Jay-Z? LL Cool J?"

Simmons was one of the first players in the burgeoning hip hop scene in the 1980s. He is co-founder of

the pioneering Def Jam Recordings record label, which has represented such artists like the Beastie Boys, Jay-Z, Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez, LL Cool J and Kanye West. And Simmons also created the Def Comedy franchise.

Jukebox musicals have been made with punk songs, hair metal, Abba songs and Carole King, but

rap and hip-hop music has yet to produce a Broadway hit. "Holler If Ya Hear Me," a rap musical that used over 20 Tupac Shakur songs, closed last year after less than two months.

Though Simmons never saw "Holler If Ya Hear Me," he said he didn't consider it to be "a celebration of hip-hop" and "I don't see any way in the word to compare what I want to do with what they did."

He said "The Scenario" will lean more toward a celebration of the music of hip-hop than social commentary, although "you can't help but mention that it did more to integrate America than any other pop cultural phenomenon."

The new musical will be produced by Simmons; Def Pictures/Jake Stein; Big Block/Scott Prisdand, Scott Benson, Tom Pellegrini and Jamie Bendell; Brian Sher and Stella Bulichnikov. □

Nile Rodgers: 'Blurred Lines' court verdict 'shocking'

SIAN WATSON
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Musician Nile Rodgers says it is "shocking" that Pharrell Williams and Robin Thicke have been found guilty of plagiarism in the "Blurred Lines" court case, adding that he believed the song's composition was not at all like Marvin Gaye's "Got to Give it Up."

Rodgers, of the band Chic, has worked alongside Williams in Daft Punk's smash hit "Get Lucky." He said Gaye's 1977 song and Thicke's 2013 hit "didn't really sound alike."

He told The Associated Press Thursday in an interview: "Compositionally, purely compositionally, I don't think they should have lost that case." He added: "'Got to Give it Up' is clearly a blues structure, ('Blurred Lines') isn't at all."



In this photo taken on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, American musician, producer, and guitarist Nile Rodgers poses for photographs in a north London hotel. **Associated Press**

Speaking for the first time since he and Thicke were ordered to pay \$7.4 million to the Gaye family, Williams told The Financial Times the decision "handicaps" those in creative fields.

"If we lose our freedom to be inspired, we're going to look up one day and the entertainment industry as we know it will be frozen in litigation," he told the newspaper. □

Paula Patton, Robin Thicke granted divorce in Los Angeles



In this Feb. 24, 2013 file photo, Paula Patton and Robin Thicke arrive at the 2013 Vanity Fair Oscars Viewing and After Party at the Sunset Plaza Hotel in West Hollywood, Calif. **Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Paula Patton and Robin Thicke are another step closer to divorce.

The actress from "Precious" and "2 Guns" was granted a divorce Tuesday from the "Blurred Lines" singer in Los Angeles. Their legal split will go into effect April 14.

The 39-year-old actress and 38-year-old singer an-

nounced they were separating last year after nine years of marriage. They have a 4-year-old son.

Patton was the inspiration behind much of Thicke's music and appeared in some of his videos.

Thicke promoted his latest album, "Paula," last summer with several public appearances accompanied by reconciliation pleas. □

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